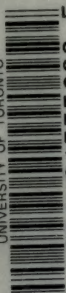


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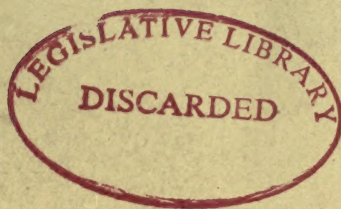
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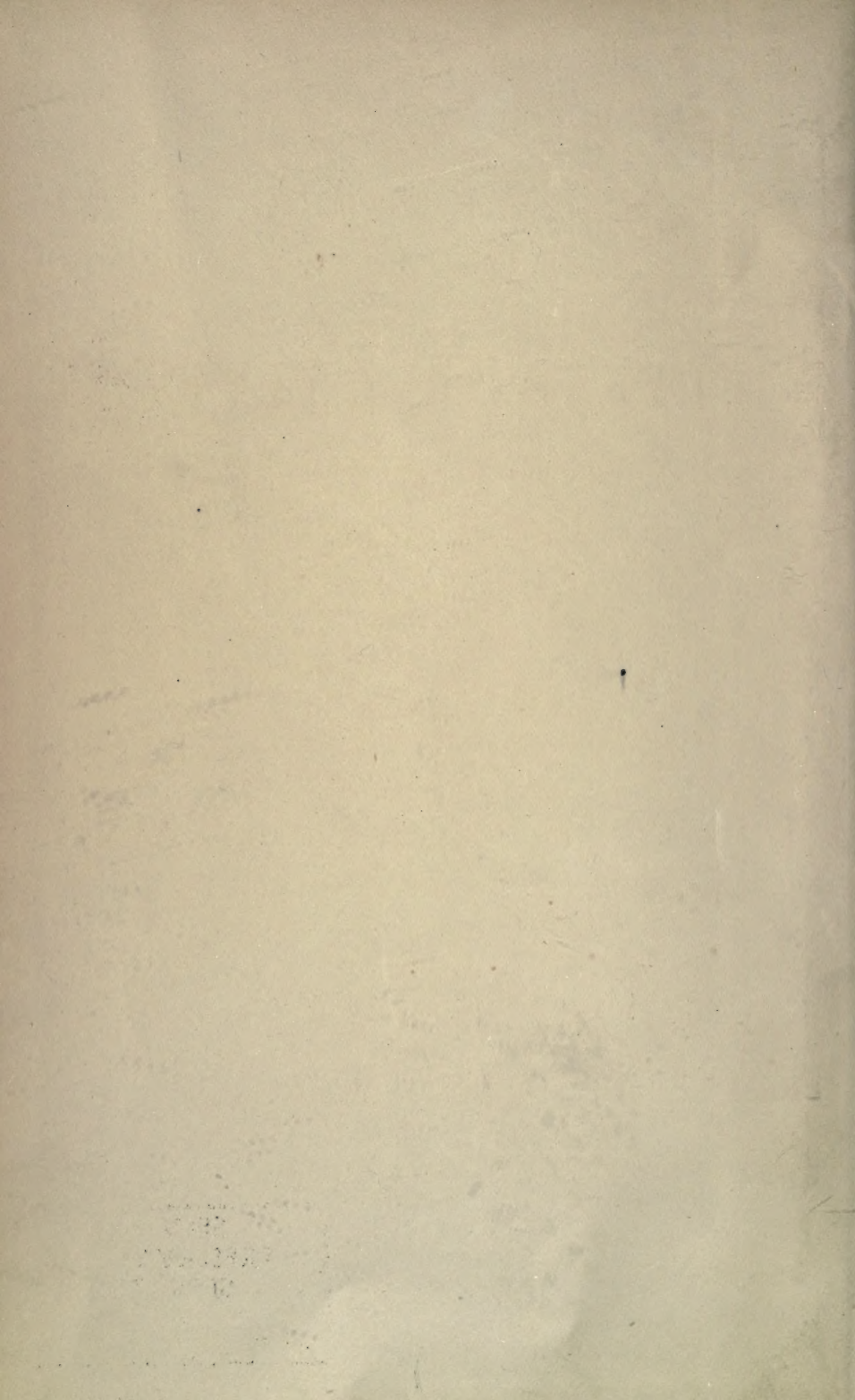






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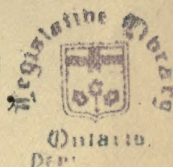
MILITARY HISTORY

*Biog.*

OF

*g.*

ULYSSES S. GRANT



FROM APRIL, 1861, TO APRIL, 1865.

BY

ADAM BADEAU,

BREVET BRIGADIER-GENERAL UNITED STATES ARMY,  
LATE MILITARY SECRETARY AND AIDE-DE-CAMP  
TO THE GENERAL-IN-CHIEF.

*apostle of  
prejudice*

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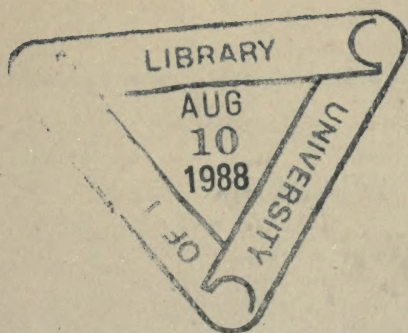
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## PREFACE TO VOLUMES II. AND III.

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THE first volume of this work relates to the earlier period of General Grant's military career, when I was not personally associated with him, and was intended as a prelude to the more important portion. The present volumes constitute the history of the last year of the war, when he commanded all the armies of the Republic. During this period I was his military secretary and aide-de-camp, and therefore an eye-witness of the important circumstances in which he personally participated. I knew his plans and wishes, as well as his judgments of men and events. His correspondence with the government, and with army and corps commanders, was familiar to me at the time. I have since examined the entire official record of the year, including the returns of troops and all the reports in existence by either national or rebel officers above the rank of brigadier-general.

For what in these volumes is quoted from official sources, I can therefore refer to the original documents, in every instance on file in the national archives; for what relates to personal incident or

character, I must be my own principal authority. I have, however, whenever it has been possible, submitted my narrative to my brother officers for their ratification; and for the facts themselves, apart from criticism, I might call my subject himself as a witness.

I have endeavored to make no declaration of rebel strength, or plans, or intentions, except upon rebel authority.

I do not expect nor desire my statements to be accepted without examination, but, when they are opposed by those of writers hostile to the nation or its principal defenders, I trust that the authority for the opposition may in all cases be consulted, and I shall be satisfied if nothing is rejected but that which is disproved.

To President Hayes and the Departments of State and War under his administration, as well as that of his predecessor, to Generals Sherman and Sheridan, to the Adjutant-General's and the Engineer Departments, and to many officers of distinction in the army and navy, I am indebted for assistance and facilities which have contributed greatly to the correctness and completeness of my work.

NEW YORK, 1881.



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OPERATIONS AROUND COLD HARBOR.

OPERATIONS AROUND RICHMOND AND PETERSBURG.

EARLY'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST WASHINGTON.

SHERMAN'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST ATLANTA.

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The campaigns of the last year of the war were so various, and the operations so complicated, that reference to the same maps is required for different periods. The illustrations have therefore been placed at the end of the volumes, with the exception of the maps of the Theatre of War, of Virginia, and of the Operations around Richmond and Petersburg, which will be found in pockets attached to the covers.





## CHAPTER XV.

**Military situation when Grant took command of all the armies—Geography of Virginia—Disposition of national troops—Policy of Grant's predecessors—Cardinal principles of Grant's strategy—Reasons for taking the field in person in Virginia—Interview with Meade—Departure for Nashville—Contrast between Grant and Sherman—Return to Washington—Preparations for spring campaign—Re-arrangement of departments and commanders—Plan for combined campaign of all the armies—Grant takes the field at Culpeper—Description of country—Organization of army of Potomac—Sheridan to command cavalry—Concentration—Instructions to various commanders—Plan of campaign in Virginia—Buell refuses a command—Forrest's raid—Capture of Plymouth—Red river campaign—Halleck the real author—Banks's preference for other movements—Objections of Grant—Persistency of Halleck—Unfairness of Halleck—Sherman ordered to support Banks in spite of Grant's objections—Red river campaign begun before Grant became general-in-chief—First orders to Banks—Anxiety of Grant—Hunter sent to Banks—Delay of Banks—Defeat of Banks—Subsequent defeat of rebels—Failure of Red river campaign—Grant applies for removal of Banks—Disappointment of Grant—Final orders for combined campaigns—Correspondence between Lincoln and Grant.**

WHEN Ulysses S. Grant assumed command of the armies of the United States, the rebels still held possession of a territory eight hundred thousand square miles in extent, and maintained a population of nine millions in revolt. Five hundred thousand men in arms,\* brave, experienced, desperate, fighting on their own soil, and led by skilful generals, made

\* See Appendix for authority for this statement.

up their military force. To rescue this region, and to overcome this population and its armies, was the task of the new commander.

The hostile forces were scattered over a field that reached from the Potomac river to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic coast to the Indian territory. The western boundary of actual war, however, was not far beyond the Mississippi river, which was strongly guarded by national troops from St. Louis to the sea. The line of the Arkansas was also held, and armed possession thus secured of the entire region north of that important stream. But in Southern Louisiana only a few points were occupied by the government, and those not distant from the Mississippi ; while in Texas a solitary garrison was maintained, adjacent to the mouth of the Rio Grande. All the rest of the vast country of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, with its abundant crops of grain and endless supplies of beef, was abandoned to the enemy ; and throughout Missouri and Northern Arkansas, partisan troops infested the river banks and harassed the inhabitants, compelling the government to maintain large forces, solely to secure the navigation of the streams, and afford a semblance of protection to the suffering and scattered loyalists.

East of the Mississippi, the line of the Tennessee and Holston rivers was maintained, covering almost the entire state of Tennessee ; while south of Chattanooga, the position lately gained in Georgia guarded East Tennessee against attacks from the main rebel army at Dalton. Nearly all of West Virginia was also securely held, a mountain asylum for loyalty.

But Virginia itself was in the possession of the



enemy. Except the commanding hills that border the Potomac and constituted the protection of the lordly river and the defences of the capital; that small but most important area around the mouth of the James, covered by the guns of Norfolk and of Fort Monroe; and the territory guarded by the army of the Potomac, now posted along the northern bank of the Rapidan,—the state was completely occupied by the rebels, and the most determined efforts of the nation had absolutely failed to wrest it from them.

Further south, along the seaboard, footholds had been secured at various points in North and South Carolina, in Georgia and Florida, and every important Southern fort was blockaded by the navy. But with these exceptions, rebel armies dominated over all the territory south of Virginia; and even behind the national lines, numerous guerilla bands, and a large disloyal population, reaching back into Maryland and almost to the capital itself, made it necessary to guard every foot of road or river used in supplying the national armies. In the South itself a reign of despotism prevailed, which made every man and boy capable of bearing arms, in all that region, a soldier. The enemy was thus enabled to bring nearly his entire strength into the field.

The central point of the struggle, it was manifest, must still be in Virginia. Before the war, this state had been the most extensive on the Atlantic coast, stretching from Maryland and Pennsylvania on the north to North Carolina on the south, and covering an area of sixty thousand square miles. The Alleghany and the Blue Ridge mountains traverse its entire extent from north to south, running parallel

with each other and with the sea. West of these ranges lies what now constitutes the state of West Virginia, severed from the more eastern portion during the war; and between them the Valley of Virginia is enclosed, a charming and fertile region, about sixty miles across. East of the Blue Ridge the country is at first broken, then undulating, and finally stretches down in plains and marshes to the sea. Two noble streams, the Potomac and the James, take their rise in the Alleghanies, at a distance from each other of more than a hundred and fifty miles, and, making their way across the Valley and through the Blue Ridge, thence gradually widen till they flow majestically into the Atlantic. The Potomac forms the northern boundary of the state, and on its banks the city of Washington is built; the James waters the richest region of Central and Southern Virginia, and Richmond stands on a pleasing site, at the head of navigation, on its northern shore. The James runs south-east from the Blue Ridge to the Atlantic, but the Potomac early in its course makes a still more southerly deflection, and finds its way by broad and numerous windings into Chesapeake bay; and at their mouths the rivers are not more than fifty miles apart.

The triangular space between them, an area of nearly twelve thousand square miles, is watered by four smaller streams—the Rappahannock, whose most important affluent is the Rapidan; the Mattaponi; the Pamunkey, with its branches, the North and South Anna; and the Chickahominy. The last is a tributary of the James, but all the others, like the Potomac, flow south-easterly, into Chesapeake bay; and where that great estuary itself becomes a part



of the Atlantic, the James also arrives at the confluence, so that all the waters between Washington and Richmond mingle at the entrance to Chesapeake bay. The two cities are situated in nearly the same longitude, but a hundred miles apart. One was the capital of the country, the other the head-quarters of the rebellion.

The territory between was of course the road for every army that attacked or defended either, and was doomed from the first to be the stage where the decisive actions of the war must be performed. For more than thirty months the greatest armies of the nation and the rebellion had contended with varying fortune on these fields; but Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Cedar Mountain, and the fights on the Peninsula had failed to determine the fate of Virginia, and when Grant took command of the national armies, this state was still the chief theatre as well as prize of the war.

The principal rebel forces east of the Mississippi were concentrated into two armies; the more important, under General Robert E. Lee, was strongly entrenched on the southern border of the Rapidan, covering and defending Richmond, the capital of Virginia as well as of the would-be Confederacy; the other, under General Joseph E. Johnston, occupied a fortified position at Dalton, in Georgia, and covered and defended Atlanta, the principal railroad centre of the entire South-West. In addition to these two great armies, the enemy maintained a large body of cavalry, under General Forrest, in North-Eastern Mississippi, a considerable force of all arms in the Shenandoah valley, and still another in South-Western Virginia and East Tennessee. Rebel

soldiers also confronted the national garrisons on the sea-coast, or occupied the blockaded ports wherever the government had no foothold on land ; and west of the Mississippi an army of more than forty thousand men, under Kirby Smith, roamed almost undisturbed from Arkansas to Mexico.

The national troops were divided into twenty-one corps and distributed among nineteen military departments, exclusive of the army of the Potomac, which did not constitute a territorial command. Of course the two forces whose success was vital to that of the war were the great Eastern and Western armies, in Virginia and Georgia. The former of these, the army of the Potomac, under Major-General George G. Meade, was encamped not eighty miles from Washington, immediately opposite its famous antagonist, the army of Northern Virginia, and on the northern bank of the same insignificant but now historic stream. On either side of the army of the Potomac, but separated from it by hundreds of miles, was a force which should have been auxiliary ; that on the right, under Major-General Franz Sigel, was scattered in West Virginia and along the Shenandoah ; while that on the left, under Major-General Benjamin F. Butler, occupied the territory around Norfolk and the mouth of the James, and a narrow strip of the North Carolina coast. These two forces ought to have constituted the wings, or at least the supports, of the main army operating against Richmond, but hitherto they had not acted in conjunction, or even in co-operation with the central column.

At the West, the army of the Cumberland, under Thomas, maintained a position corresponding to that of its great compeer east of the Alleghanies ; it was

still lying in the neighborhood of Chattanooga, with Atlanta for its objective point, and Johnston's army barring the way at Dalton and Rome. On Thomas's right, the main portion of Sherman's column was in motion from Vicksburg, to rejoin the army of the Cumberland, from which it had been separated during the Meridian raid ; and on the left, Schofield, at the head of the old army of the Ohio, was shifting his position from day to day, holding and pursuing Longstreet by turns in East Tennessee.

But besides the great vortex of war that was struggling and seething in Virginia, and that other, hardly less mighty, among the mountains of Georgia, there were currents and counter-currents setting in various directions, all over the continent. Beyond the Mississippi three national columns, starting from New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Little Rock, were moving as far as possible from the principal theatre of war ; thirty thousand men absolutely advancing up the Red river towards Shreveport, while the fate of the entire West seemed again balancing near Chattanooga. Troops were hurrying to and fro in North Carolina and West Tennessee, furloughed veterans were returning to the front by thousands all along the line from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, and at Charleston national forces had long been besieging that bulwark and foundation-stone of the rebellion, with formidable armaments but with fruitless zeal.

On the other hand, while Sherman's command was divided at Vicksburg, and Gillmore's forces were wasted at Charleston, the enemy was collecting and concentrating his strength, recovering from the effects of the Meridian raid, and preparing for the Red river



campaign. The resources of the rebels, as well as their numerical strength, were doubtless inferior to those of the government ; but these disadvantages were more than balanced by the defensive position of the enemy and the peculiar difficulties encountered by the national commanders ; the vast territory they were compelled to occupy, the hostile population it was necessary to control, and the long lines of river and railroad they were obliged to protect in order to supply the operating armies.\*

But besides and above all this, the great national forces at the East and West had hitherto acted independently and altogether without concert, "like a balky team, no two ever pulling together ;"† and the rebels were thus enabled to use their interior lines of communication to reinforce the army or the position most in peril. They commonly remained behind their bulwarks, but sometimes assumed the offensive, that surest of all defences, holding the national troops at bay at one place, with a smaller force, while they massed their strength elsewhere, and hurried along by shorter lines to strike at some point where they themselves were more vigorously pressed, or their

\* Pollard, the most prominent of the rebel historians, declares : "It was at no great physical disadvantage that the South, with all her strength brought to the surface by conscription and impressment, with all her resources employed in the war, re-entered the contest in the year 1864. . . . It was then accounted that the conscription would bring more than four hundred thousand men into the field. . . . There was no longer any scarcity of iron implements and machinery. . . . The resources of the South, both in men and subsistence, to prosecute the war were ample."

† "The armies in the East and West acted independently and without concert, like a balky team, no two ever pulling together."  
—*Grant's Report*, 1864-65.

antagonist was unprepared. During seasons of inactivity, also, large numbers were furloughed to assist the slaves at the farm work, now doubly indispensable for the support of their armies; for, all the free population of the South being in the field, the question of resources had become one of extreme importance to the rebel leaders.

And so, many of the advantages which the government possessed were neutralized or lost. So, the struggle was protracted, the cost enhanced, and the expenditure of human life increased. A score of discordant armies; half a score of contrary campaigns; confusion and uncertainty in the field, doubt and dejection, and sometimes despondency at home; battles whose object none could perceive; a war whose issue none could foretell—it was chaos itself, before light had appeared, or order was evolved.

From the beginning of the war Grant had been firmly convinced that no stable peace could be obtained, none which would really conduce to the happiness of the whole people, North and South, until the military power of the rebellion was entirely broken. He had also long believed that active and continuous operations of all the troops that could be brought into the field, regardless of season or weather, were necessary to a speedy termination of the war. Accordingly, when placed in supreme command, he at once determined to use the greatest number of troops practicable against the armed force of the enemy. This was the primal idea, the cardinal principle with which he began his campaigns as general-in-chief—to employ all the force of all the armies continually and concurrently, so that there should be no recuperation on the part of the rebels,

no rest from attack, no opportunity to reinforce first one and then another point with the same troops, at different seasons ; no possibility of profiting by the advantages of interior lines ; no chance to furlough troops, to reorganize armies, or re-create supplies ; no respite of any sort, anywhere, until absolute submission ended the war. Only thus could the preponderance in force of the national armies be made available ; only thus could the counter-disadvantages possessed by the rebels be balanced ; only this policy of unceasing and untiring aggression, this wearing out and crushing out, this war upon all the resources and all the armies of the rebellion, could now succeed. For the ordinary strategy of capturing places and then holding them, of fighting campaigns and then resting, had entirely failed. During three long weary years the nation had watched in anxiety and gloom the various movements of the different armies, and the result was still increasing gloom and ever additional anxiety. Grant determined to change all this, to make all his armies really co-operate, not only work in harmony, but simultaneously and incessantly ; to follow up every chance, to threaten every point, to keep all his own troops everywhere in motion, and at the same time, of course, those of the enemy.

He would neglect none of the advantages of force or skill ; his generals had displayed as much genius as those of the rebels ; his soldiers were as brave and as inured to war ; his own previous career showed him deficient neither in invention nor audacity ; and he chose now to put all the weights into the scale, to leave no door open for failure ; to take every advantage which the game allowed. It was the salvation, the very existence of the country



that was at stake ; and, subordinating every consideration to this, he planned the scheme which should apply all the resources at his command—and they were all that the nation had to bestow—to overthrow and exhaust and annihilate the greatest rebellion in history. These views were thereafter constantly kept in mind ; all the orders given and all the campaigns planned were in pursuance of them alone.

The transcendent importance of the issues in Virginia, upon which the fate of both the national and the rebel capital depended, made it apparent at the outset that the new general-in-chief must either remain at Washington, in order to direct the movements in that vicinity, or take the field in person with the army of the Potomac. For the entire rebel strength culminated in Virginia ; whatever efforts were made elsewhere, however sturdy a defence at the South or West, only here could the battles be fought which would absolutely end the war. The Mississippi had been opened, New Orleans captured, and Chattanooga secured, but so long as the so-called Confederacy could boast a capital within ninety miles of Washington, and maintain an army whose banners flaunted almost within sight of Congress itself, the most brilliant victories of the national arms elsewhere were incomplete, the result and aim of the war were unattained.

This, however, was not the only reason which convinced Grant that the East was the proper post for the commanding general of the army. The force that defended Richmond was the strongest, the best led, and the best appointed which the rebellion had produced. It had fought more battles and won more victories ; it was steadier under defeat and surer in

success, than any other of the great rebel commands. It was the main stay and hope of the enemy, its leader was the favorite chief among all the rebel generals. It had thus far withstood many fierce attempts at overthrow, and itself had been the assailant in many desperate encounters, absolutely succumbing in none, which was what no other rebel army could declare. It was important to break its spirit and falsify its boasts, and it was proper that the general-in-chief should himself assume this heaviest share of the burden imposed on national commanders. "Like yourself," said Sherman; "you take the biggest load."

There was, however, still another consideration which had weight with him in this emergency. The political and personal influences of various sorts and of various individuals, which centred at Washington, had thwarted some generals, and interfered with all who had commanded the army of the Potomac since the beginning of the war. If the general-in-chief should now return to the West, leaving only a subordinate at the head of the forces between Washington and Richmond, that subordinate would certainly be trammelled, and perhaps defeated, by means and measures of the same character as those which had obstructed and delayed the operations of his predecessors. It was Grant's duty himself to encounter these difficulties; and, with the weight of his reputation and his rank, to withstand, if he could not prevent, political interference; to remain where he could control all the movements of all the armies, absolutely and independently.

For it was, from the first, his determination to be in reality the military chief of the armies, if he

assumed their nominal command. He resolved that, if he sustained the responsibility, he must also possess the power. The country and Congress had evidently intended him to be paramount in purely military matters; and, while he was thoroughly subordinate, both in act and intent, he yet was determined that the authority committed to him by the law should be left in his own hands. If he remained at the East, this was secured; but, with the general-in-chief a thousand miles away, the government might be unable to resist the entreaties or threats of interested or anxious outsiders, and the best concerted schemes might come to naught.

The President and the Secretary of War, however, at once assured the lieutenant-general of their intention to entrust him with the absolute control of all military movements. The President declared that he was glad to impose this duty on his new assistant: he himself was no aspirant for military fame, and shrank from the responsibility of directing armies; he had never assumed to interfere in military operations until he found it impossible in any other way to procure a forward movement, and it was only when convinced of this impossibility that he had made the first of his "Executive Orders," following it up with others when they seemed to him indispensable. He had no doubt that some of these orders had been ill-judged; but at least they had been inspired by patriotic motives. He repeated that he was glad now to resign this extraordinary authority into the hands where it properly belonged. He assured Grant of his intention to support him heartily, and in no way either to thwart his plans or restrict his operations; and this pledge was faithfully



maintained. The Secretary of War also promised Grant that everything should be done to hold up his hands and secure his success, a promise that he never violated. Indeed, so absolute was the confidence reposed in the new commander, and so peculiar the relation in which he stood to the country and the government, that not only did neither the President nor the Secretary suggest to him a programme of operations, but they both expressly desired him not to inform them of his plans; and with this request he scrupulously complied.

From the moment, therefore, when it was decided that he should be entrusted with supreme command, Grant had no doubt whatever of his duty or his design. In Washington he would not stay in time of war; he must then direct in person the campaigns of that renowned army of the Potomac which had passed through so many vicissitudes, encountered so many hardships, and withstood so many dangers, and still seemed as far from its goal as if those vicissitudes and hardships and dangers had never been endured.

On the 9th of March,\* he received his commission as lieutenant-general, and on the 10th, he went to the front. At this time, communication between Washington and the army of the Potomac was by the Orange and Alexandria railroad, Meade's headquarters being at Brandy station, fifty miles from

\* The formal order was issued on the 12th of March: "Major-General Halleck is, at his own request, relieved from duty as General-in-Chief of the army, and Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant is assigned to the command of the armies of the United States. The head-quarters of the army will be in Washington, and also with Lieutenant-General Grant in the field."

the capital, and ten miles north of the Rapidan. Grant arrived in a driving storm of rain, but was met by the commander of the army of the Potomac, and escorted to his quarters with every demonstration of respect.

The two generals had not met since the Mexican War, when both had been lieutenants. The position of Meade was now one of peculiar delicacy. He had been placed in command of the army of the Potomac nine months before, when its fortunes were at their lowest ebb, and at once fought and won the most important battle which had then occurred east of the Alleghanies ; he had driven the enemy from the soil of the loyal states, saved the capital from capture, and inflicted serious injury on the rebel army. Subsequently his success had been less brilliant, but he had suffered no severe reverse. Despite these claims, although he had not, indeed, been superseded, another was set over him, with the special idea of controlling the movements of that army which he had led to decided victory. He might very naturally have been discontented ; but no manifestation of such a feeling was apparent. He displayed, on the contrary, a marked magnanimity. During his first conversation with Grant, he took occasion to refer to the rumor that he was to be relieved from the command of the army of the Potomac, and urged the general-in-chief to act in the matter precisely as his judgment dictated. The emergency of the country, he declared, was such that no delicacy towards individuals should be allowed to interfere. "I ask you," he said, "to remove me at once, if it suits your plans." It was this spirit which animated all of Grant's greatest subordinates, which inspired Sherman, and Thomas,

and others whose story I have yet to relate, and made them, instead of rivals, coadjutors of their chief, and enabled him to be secure of their support in the most trying emergencies, and with their aid to accomplish what, without just such cordial co-operation, and just such self-sacrifice, could never have been achieved.

But Grant had no desire for the removal of Meade. He acknowledged frankly that, until his arrival at Washington, he had supposed it a foregone conclusion that the commander of the army of the Potomac was to be relieved; but this supposition had been based entirely upon the persistent statements of the newspaper press in regard to the intentions of the government, and on the declarations of influential civilians at his own head-quarters. On arriving at the capital, however, he discovered that the government had no desire for a change, and Grant himself saw no reason to displace the man who had succeeded at Gettysburg. The question of Meade's removal was never mooted between the administration and the lieutenant-general.

Grant remained all night with the army of the Potomac, discussing its past and future campaigns, and on the 11th, he returned to Washington, where the President had arranged for a state dinner to be given in his honor; but the soldier was anxious to return to Nashville at once, to lay out his plans for the Western campaigns, and instal his successor in the command of the Western army. This must be done promptly, or he could not himself be at the East again in time for early operations there. So he started that night for the West, declining the invitation of the President.



Before his departure, Grant had informed the government of his desire to place Sherman in command of the Military Division of the Mississippi, and to entrust to that general the great campaign still to be fought in Georgia. The administration had not yet learned to appreciate Sherman's ability, and more than half the country was still unfamiliar with his name; he had never commanded an independent army in the field, except in the first assault on Vicksburg and during the late Meridian campaign; he had been called crazy, when, in the first days of the war, he declared that two hundred thousand men were necessary to take and hold Kentucky and Tennessee; and although he had been gradually recovering from the effects of this unmerited odium, his promotion to the second important position in the entire army seemed to the administration hardly warranted by his achievements or his fame. Even Halleck, who admired Sherman, doubted whether he would prove equal to the command of the Western army. But Grant persisted in urging the appointment, assuring the President of his intimate knowledge of Sherman's fitness for this great place, and staking his own reputation upon the success of his subordinate. The opposition had been passive only, not pointed, and Grant was allowed to have his way. The same order which assigned him to the command of all the armies placed Sherman at the head of the Military Division of the Mississippi.

At the same time Halleck was made chief of staff of the army, at the express desire of the President and the Secretary of War. The position was unknown to the law, and appeared unnecessary, for the general-in-chief was already provided with a chief of

staff; but that officer was to serve in the field with Grant, while Halleck would remain at Washington as a military adviser and assistant of the government. Neither the President nor the Secretary of War had contributed to Grant's advancement, and it seemed at first possible that Halleck had been detained with sinister designs; as he had been superseded by his own subordinate, he might be inclined to use the remnants of his influence to obstruct Grant's plans and lessen his power. Suggestions such as these were made to Grant by some of his over-anxious friends; but no ground for their fears was evident to him, and the result confirmed his confidence. Halleck manifested complete subordination to his new commander, and proved as devoted to the interests of the country, as anxious to carry out the plans and obey the orders of the lieutenant-general, as if he himself had never held the highest place. He indeed seemed glad to be relieved from the cares and responsibilities of supreme command.

At the same time, and at Grant's request, McPherson was assigned to the command of the Department of the Tennessee. Both Sherman and McPherson were thus placed over the heads of their seniors in rank, by virtue of a law passed in 1862, giving this power to the President. Sherman was out-ranked by Thomas, whom he was about to command, and McPherson by Hurlbut, one of his new subordinates; but neither Thomas nor Hurlbut failed to exhibit the same patriotic and soldierly spirit which was manifested at the capital by him who had so lately been above them all. Each acquiesced without a murmur.

On the 14th of March, Grant arrived at Nashville

He had previously ordered Sherman to meet him there, and on the 17th, that officer came up from Memphis, having returned from the Meridian raid. His first words to Grant were: "I cannot congratulate you on your promotion; the responsibility is too great." The other was silent, and smoked his cigar.\*

The contrast between the two was striking. One was tall, angular, and spare, as if his superabundant energy had consumed his flesh; sandy-haired, sharp-featured; his nose prominent, his lips thin, his grey eyes flashing fire as fast as lightning on a summer's night; his whole face mobile as an actor's, and revealing every shade of thought or emotion that flitted across his active mind; his manner pronounced; his speech quick, decided, loud. His words were distinct; his ideas clear, rapid, coming indeed almost too fast for utterance, but in dramatic, brilliant form, so that they got full development, while an eager gesticulation illustrated and enforced his thought simultaneously with speech itself. Boiling over with ideas, crammed full of feeling, discussing every subject and pronouncing on all; provoking criticism and contradiction and admiration by turns; striking ideas out of the flintiest mind; sympathetic; suggestive to himself as well as to others; starting new notions constantly in his own brain, and following them up, no matter how far or whither they led; witty, eloquent, sarcastic, logical; every attribute of person or temper or intellect indicated genius—every peculiarity fascinated or commanded the attention. No one could be with him half an hour and

\* I was present at this meeting, and was struck at the time with the contrast which I have endeavored to portray in the text.



doubt his greatness, or fail to recognize the traits that have made him world-renowned. This was the lieutenant.

The chief was smaller, but stouter in form, younger in looks and years ; calmer in manner a hundredfold. His hair and beard were brown, and both heavier than Sherman's ; his features marked, but not prominent ; while his eye, clear but not piercing nor penetrating, seemed formed rather to resist than aid the interpretation of his thought, and never betrayed that it was sounding the depths of another nature than his own. A heavy jaw ; a sharply-cut mouth, which had a singular power of expressing sweetness and strength combined, and at times became set with a rigidity like that of Fate itself ; a broad, square brow which at first struck no one as imposing, but, on being studied, indicated unusual development both of intellect and will—these made up a physiognomy that artists always liked to model. The habitual expression of his face was so quiet as to be almost incomprehensible ; strong, but its strength concealed by the manner of wearing hair and beard. His figure was compact and of medium height, but though well-made, he stooped slightly in the shoulders. His manner plain, placid, almost meek, in great moments disclosed to those who knew him well, immense, but still suppressed, intensity. In utterance he was slow and sometimes embarrassed, but the words were well-chosen, never leaving the remotest doubt of what he intended to convey, and now and then fluent and forcible, when the speaker became aroused. The whole man was a marvel of simplicity, a powerful nature veiled in the plainest possible exterior, imposing on all but the

acutest judges of character, or the constant companions of his unguarded hours.

Not a sign about him suggested rank, or reputation, or power. He discussed the most ordinary themes with apparent interest, and turned from them in the same quiet tones, and without a shade of difference in his manner, to decisions that involved the fate of armies, his own fame, or the life of the republic; sending forty thousand men on a new campaign, or hearing of his own elevation to a power and position unsurpassed by that of any general in history, with the same equanimity and apparently the same indifference with which he listened to the trifles of the hour or the rumors of the camp; but uttering, at the most unexpected intervals and in the most casual way, the clearest ideas in the tersest form; announcing judgments, made apparently at the moment, which he never reversed, and which the world has never seen reason to reverse; enunciating opinions or declaring plans of the most important character, in the plainest words and commonest manner, as if great things and small were to him of equal moment; as if it cost him no more to command armies than to direct a farm, to capture cities than to drive a horse.

In battle, however, the sphynx awoke, the riddle was solved. The outward calm indeed was even then not entirely broken, but the utterance was prompt, the ideas were rapid, the judgment was decisive; the words were those of command; the whole man became intense as it were with a white heat. His nature indeed seemed like a sword, drawn only in the field or in emergencies. At ordinary times a scabbard concealed the sharpness

and temper of the blade ; but when this was thrown aside, amid the smoke and din of battle, the weapon flashed, and thrust, and smote—and won.

These two, so different, had been together in evil report and good report, in disaster and in victory, in battles and sieges and campaigns, and neither had ever failed the other. Each seemed to find in the traits of his friend that which his own nature perhaps lacked, or at any rate appreciated. Grant was fascinated by his brilliant coadjutor, who excited in him a depth and reality of regard such as he rarely showed ; and Sherman reposed on the calm strength of his chief with a confidence and an entireness which never faltered and was never deceived. They knew each other well, and each recognized the attributes that made the other's power. Each, too, was great enough to be magnanimous, and they were ready now to enter upon the new and wider fields to which they were assigned, each with the same confidence in the ability and the loyalty of his friend which had hitherto sustained their intercourse in its remarkable purity, and doubtless had enhanced the measure of success which each had then attained.

Grant felt the full force of what Sherman had so characteristically uttered ; he felt that his promotion was not a subject for unmixed congratulation ; his responsibilities were indeed too great to be lightly or complacently assumed. The crisis of the country and of his own fame was too absolute for him to be elated at the unprecedented advancement which had come to him all unsought. He felt, of course, the natural gratification that every man must receive when honors and rewards are bestowed upon him by his country ; but the future was too obscure, the



task set before him was too tremendous, too many of his predecessors had failed in attempting what he must now essay, for him to experience any extraordinary exultation.

Sherman advised, and even urged, earnestly, that Grant should remain at the West. "Here," said he, "you are at home; you are acquainted with your ground; you have tested your subordinates; you know us, and we know you. Here you are sure of success; here, too, you will be untrammelled. At the East, you must begin new campaigns in an unfamiliar field, with troops and officers whom you have not tried, whom you have never led to victory. They cannot feel towards you as we do. Near Washington, besides, you will be beset, and, it may be, fettered by scheming politicians. Stay here, where you have made your fame, and use the same means to consolidate it."\*

But Grant was firmly convinced that his duty took him in person to Virginia; that nowhere else and in no other way could he secure what was now his principal object and desire, the constant use of all the troops in every direction at the same time. Unless he was near the capital, he could not control all the operations of all the armies without interruption, and could not carry out the plan that he believed the only one by which the rebellion could be overthrown.

Accordingly, on the 17th of March, he formally assumed command of all the armies, installing Sherman in that vacated by himself, the Military

\* "For God's and your country's sake, come out of Washington. I foretold to General Halleck before he left Corinth, the inevitable result, and I now exhort you to come West."—*Sherman to Grant, March 10, 1864.*

Division of the Mississippi ; and on the 19th, he started again for the capital. Sherman accompanied him as far as Cincinnati. On the way the chief explained to his subordinate the plan he had devised for the entire campaign, and defined the particular part he expected Sherman to perform. It was the same which Grant had hitherto intended should be his own, the movement against Atlanta, and thence towards the sea.\*

The principal ideas were fully developed by one general, and as fully comprehended by the other ; but Sherman was fettered with no detailed instructions. At this time, he was not even given written orders ; so absolute was the confidence in his ability and fidelity, entertained by the head of the army. Grant had no fears that his conceptions would not be executed ; no apprehensions that his friend and subordinate would claim to have suggested when he only obeyed ; and no desire himself to hamper the operations, to infringe on the prerogatives, or grasp at the glory that fairly belonged to another. On the contrary, he was anxious to give Sherman every opportunity to achieve a separate renown. How splendidly this unparalleled confidence was rewarded, it will be my fortunate duty to describe.

The two soldiers parted at Cincinnati, Grant proceeding east, amid the acclamations of crowds who greeted him at every railway station along the road, and Sherman returning to Nashville, the head-quar-

\* "Sherman will move at the same time you do, or two or three days in advance, Joe Johnston's army being his objective point, and the heart of Georgia his ultimate aim. If successful, he will secure the line from Chattanooga to Mobile, with the help of Banks."—*Grant to Meade, April 9, 1864.*

ters of his new command. But, although received with cheers and banners, as the chief who had won so many victories, and as the recognized military head of the republic, Grant had still much to contend with in the popular mind. Many who had hitherto placed all confidence in his ability, now distrusted his fitness to meet these more extended emergencies. Those who had reviled him all along, those who secretly wished the rebellion to succeed, those who, for partisan purposes, were anxious to embarrass the government, all joined in a chorus of prophecy that was nearer to malediction. Timid friends grew fearful ; the best were anxious ; and thousands like Sherman, grieved to see him leave the West, the scene of all his triumphs, to enter upon the untried sphere so near the capital, where defeat had been so much more frequent than success, and where all political interference with military movements was believed to have its origin and home. The country, indeed, leaned on his arm, and reposed on his strength, because there was no one else to whom to turn ; but there were as many prophets of adverse as of prosperous fortune ; the despondent were louder than the hopeful ; the croakers out-numbered the confident.

Grant himself, though grave, was not oppressed by the weight of his responsibilities ; he looked all the dangers and difficulties full in the face, and was not daunted. He saw how terrible was the crisis, not only for himself, but, far more, for the country ; he measured all the ills of defeat at this juncture, and deliberately advanced in the way that he had planned. He felt, indeed, no boastful, exuberant enthusiasm, but instead, a quiet consciousness of strength, that convinced him he should be able to conquer all opposition.



I once ventured to ask him whether the prospect never appalled him ; whether the difficulties never seemed insuperable ; if he really and always hoped to succeed. He answered in simple terms that he was perfectly certain of success ; that he felt now as he had felt at Donelson, and Vicksburg, and Chattanooga, when the dangers, though less in extent, were equally alarming. He had no fear of not doing all that he was put in his place to do. He did not know, he said, how long it might be before he accomplished his task, nor what interruptions or obstacles might intervene, but of its eventual accomplishment no shadow of a doubt ever seemed to cross his mind. This confidence never deserted him. There was no moment, however dark or distressing, when he was not more than hopeful. "The simple faith in success," said Sherman, "you have always manifested, I can liken to nothing else than the faith a Christian has in the Saviour." It sustained him under the roughest shocks of fortune, and amid the most protracted days of gloom and uncertainty it neither flagged nor failed. It was the foundation, doubtless, of that resolution which was never shaken, and of that equanimity which was never disturbed.

On the 23rd of March, Grant arrived again at Washington, and the same day began his preparations for the combination of campaigns with which he meant to terminate the war. The first duty of all was concentration. The forces of the republic, scattered along the Atlantic coast, and up and down the Mississippi river, the ten thousand veterans at home on furlough, the armies in almost every one of the nineteen military departments, must all be brought together, or at least be made convergent

before any simultaneous efforts could occur. The troops in Florida and on the south-eastern frontier of Georgia, as well as in North and South Carolina, were acting against different and comparatively unimportant points, spread out so as to cover a wide and disconnected territory ; and, although of course in some degree an annoyance to the enemy, in reality doing nothing towards accomplishing the main objects of the war. Grant at once gave orders for abandoning as many of these positions and as much of this territory as it was not absolutely indispensable to hold for the sake of maintaining or strengthening the blockade. Every point along the Atlantic, south of the James, was stripped to its minimum, and the troops were ordered to Virginia. The attack on Charleston had already been suspended, but it was now entirely countermanded, and all efforts to penetrate to the interior from the sea were abandoned ; for Grant believed that the coast itself would fall into his hands, whenever it was turned by reverses in the rear. He maintained that if two or three interior and indispensable positions were once acquired, the other and subordinate ones must follow ; but that the outside and dependent places might all be captured, and yet the main objective points be unattained ; that these points themselves were best, indeed only to be attacked by destroying, not merely defeating, but absolutely destroying, the armies that covered them.\*

Not only, however, were the detachments scattered along the sea-coast summoned to take part in the great central campaigns, but more than half the

\* " In civil wars it is the important points only which should be guarded—we must not go to all places."—*Napoleon to the Duke of Rovigo.*

forces distributed throughout the North, amounting now to many thousands, were ordered to the front. For, even while the existence of the nation was at stake, troops had been detained hundreds and even thousands of miles from the sound of a hostile gun, and military departments organized where the profoundest peace prevailed. Sometimes this had occurred through sheer mismanagement ; sometimes it had been with a view to provide commands and positions for generals who had failed in the field, but could not be readily or entirely discarded ; sometimes it was simply to oblige politicians who desired the credit of being soldiers without incurring the danger. Grant at once set about breaking up this system ; he abolished or concentrated the superfluous departments ; he brought from the rear the troops so much needed in front, and recommended the dismissal of more than a hundred generals, useless for fighting purposes, but who nevertheless held the rank and position which should have been reserved to incite and reward commanders in the field. It was of course necessary to leave a few troops behind for recruiting purposes, as well as to guard the prisoners and hospitals ; there were, besides, some really exposed positions on the north-eastern coast and along the Canada frontier, which, throughout the war, it was essential to protect against vessels equipped and expeditions organized under cover of the British flag ; but had it not been for these contingencies, every man could have been brought up from the rear.

Steps of this sort, however, were not to be taken without difficulty, for they intruded on the domain of politics. Nearly every officer of importance who was displaced would become an enemy of the admin-



istration, while his friends would protest against the injustice done him, and threaten to oppose the President at the next elections. No government is sufficiently independent to entirely ignore considerations such as these, and Lincoln was obliged to recognize their force. It was necessary, indeed, to be strong at home, in order to give Grant all the strength he needed in the field. The President, therefore, did not order the dismissal of very many generals, nor did he in other respects invariably adopt Grant's suggestions in regard to military matters at the rear. Enough, however, was done to greatly aid the lieutenant-general; and probably no commander ever found a government more anxious to assist him, or more efficient in carrying out his plans.

The military departments, reduced to eighteen, were re-arranged as follows:—The Department of the East included New England and New York; it embraced a long extent of exposed sea-coast, as well as of lake frontier, and innumerable rebel refugees, spies, and sympathizers were concealed or blatant within its borders. Grant allowed it to remain under Major-General Dix, who had already administered its affairs for nearly a year; but, at the opening of the spring campaign, its forces were reduced to eighteen hundred men. The Department of the Susquehanna comprised the state of Pennsylvania, and was garrisoned by two thousand two hundred soldiers, under Major-General Couch. The Middle Department lay nearer the frontier of actual war, and comprehended nearly all of Maryland, the whole of Delaware, and that portion of Virginia east of Chesapeake bay. This command was entrusted to Major-General Lewis Wallace, with four thousand one hundred men;

the near neighborhood of the Department of Washington, and of the army of the Potomac, rendering a larger force unnecessary, despite the avowed and often active sympathies of rebel inhabitants. The Northern Department embraced the four great states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, all lying along the Canada frontier, and constantly threatened with raids originating in British territory; on this account a force of six thousand eight hundred soldiers was maintained here, under Major-General Heintzleman. The Department of the North-West included Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and the Indian district beyond, as far as the Rocky mountains, and required a force sufficient to guard it against the incursions of savages; accordingly, two thousand eight hundred men were assigned to its commander, General Pope. The Department of Kansas lay south of that last named and west of Missouri, and was unimportant, except as affording a refuge for guerillas and other outlaws; it was held by four thousand six hundred men, under Major-General Curtis. The Department of the Missouri included only the state whose name it bore, but half of its population was rebel; and here Rosecrans was in command, with ten thousand soldiers. The Department of New Mexico, still further west, at the very interior of the continent, needed only a guard of thirty-seven hundred men, under Brigadier-General Carleton. On the Pacific coast, a department including California and Oregon, and named after the great ocean by which it was bounded, remained under Brigadier-General Wright, who was in command of five thousand six hundred soldiers. All these departments were at this time outside the theatre of actual war.

The other territorial commands were far more important. The Department of Arkansas, consisting of the state of that name, contained eighteen thousand men, under Steele; the Department of the Gulf, which embraced Louisiana and Texas, was left under Banks, who commanded a force of fifty-six thousand soldiers; the Department of the Tennessee, Grant's old command, reaching from the Mississippi river to the Tennessee, and from Banks's northern boundary to the Ohio, was commanded by McPherson, who had under him fifty-six thousand troops. The Department of the Cumberland, taking in all of Kentucky and Tennessee east and north of the Tennessee river, except that portion assigned to the Department of the Ohio, remained under Thomas, whose entire force amounted to one hundred and two thousand men. The limits of the Department of the Ohio, under Schofield, were unchanged, including only East Tennessee, and the region behind it, as far as the Ohio: it contained twenty-six thousand five hundred men. Further east was the Department of West Virginia, under Sigel, whose troops were twenty-six thousand in number. The Department of Washington comprised an area of only a few miles, but it included the capital and its immediate defences, and was garrisoned by twenty thousand soldiers, under Major-General Augur. The Department of Virginia and North Carolina, under Butler, contained forty-seven thousand men. The Department of the South embraced all the territory that had been gained along the sea-coast, south of North Carolina, and was commanded by Major-General Gillmore, whose force consisted of nine thousand seven hundred men. Besides these, there were the army of the Potomac,



numbering ninety-seven thousand soldiers, and the Ninth corps, still under Burnside, and now about twenty-two thousand strong.

The total effective strength of the national armies, after every effort had been made to bring them up to the highest point, was five hundred and thirty-three thousand men.\* Over this force Grant was as absolutely supreme, as free to dictate its every movement, as any general, not a monarch, who ever took the field.

The plan according to which he meant to wield these various armies and employ these different generals was simple and direct in its main outlines, although, reaching over so wide a territory, it necessarily became somewhat complicated in detail. It was not changed, except in one important particular, until there was no longer need of plans to be conceived, or of armies to execute the plans.

In accordance with the tendency and character of all his strategy, Grant determined to merge his whole strength into two, or at the most three large armies, and to employ these as so many units against the

\* Six hundred and sixty-two thousand, three hundred and forty-five soldiers were reported to the adjutant-general of the army, as *present for duty* on the 1st of May, 1864; but, as every one familiar with military operations is aware, the number of men whom their commander can absolutely put into battle is always very much smaller than what is called the "paper army." The field returns are those that show the fighting strength, and at Grant's headquarters it was always the column of "present for duty equipped," which was anxiously scanned to see how many troops were really at his disposal. On the 1st of May, the *present for duty equipped* in his entire command numbered five hundred and thirty-three thousand, four hundred and forty-seven men.—See Appendix for the two returns of "present for duty," and "present for duty equipped." See also letter of adjutant-general of the army, note to page 94.

enemy, selecting, as far as possible, for all the national efforts one common centre and aim. Lee's army and Richmond, of course, would constitute this aim ; but at the West, Johnston's army had still to be destroyed before the national forces in that quarter could be brought to bear directly against the focus of the rebellion. At the East, also, there were two distinct necessities ; first, that of guarding Washington, and next, only less important, that of protecting the region comprised in Butler's command, the capture of which would at once open to the rebels an outlet to the sea, and unrestricted communication with foreign sympathizers. These exigencies rendered it impossible at the outset to unite the army of the Potomac with that on the James. Grant, however, devised a scheme which, of all those practicable, came the nearest to unification.

At the same time that Sherman, massing the troops of his three departments, advanced against Johnston's army, at Dalton, in Georgia, Meade was to move from his base north of the Rapidan, against Lee ; while Butler, with all the strength that could be collected from his entire command, reinforced also by the Tenth corps, under Gillmore, was to operate on the south side of the James, directly against Richmond. To leave Washington uncovered would hazard the safety, not only of the capital, but possibly of the republic, and Grant did not dream of following any route to Richmond but that which should constantly interpose his main army between Lee and the North. The fact that co-operation was intended between Butler and Meade was, however, to control the movements of each, so that if the rebels, defeated by Meade in front, or threatened by Butler

in the rear, should fall back within their entrenchments at Richmond, the army of the Potomac would follow at once, and the two national forces become a unit on the James. On the other hand, it was Grant's intention to fight Lee with Meade's army, wherever and whenever he would stand; and while this contest was going on north of Richmond, he hoped that Butler would step in and seize the rebel capital.

But Richmond was to Grant a means, not an end. His first object in the Virginia campaign was not the capture of the rebel capital, but the destruction of the rebel army. Richmond was to be attacked because it was defended by Lee, not Lee because he defended Richmond; and if the Southern army should escape, Grant cared comparatively little about the occupation of the town. He even preferred to fight his way to Richmond rather than at once assume a position at its gates, because he hoped at least to cripple, if not absolutely annihilate, the army of Northern Virginia on the way. Richmond, however, was Lee's base, and, therefore, Grant planned that while he was fighting Lee in front with Meade's command, Butler at the rear should seize either Richmond itself, or the railways by which both Lee and Richmond were supplied. Thus, even if Lee fell back upon his capital, it would only be to more certain ruin; for with national forces holding the southern and western railways, no rebel army could exist a week in Virginia.

Sherman, meanwhile, was to concentrate all his efforts against one object, Johnston's army. He was to follow it wherever it went, to fight it whenever it stood; to sap its supplies and break up its strength;



penetrating as far as possible into the enemy's country, and doing all the damage he could to the military resources of the South.\* He was to acquire Atlanta, because that was the point where the most important railroads of the entire South converged; and, when Atlanta had fallen, he was to separate from that point, retaining, however, possession of the line between it and Chattanooga, and to move towards Mobile, dividing the Confederacy again, as had been done when the Mississippi was opened the year before; but he was repeatedly enjoined that the rebel army was to be his objective point. Atlanta was indeed covered and defended by Johnston, and Atlanta it was important to secure; but if it became necessary to choose between Johnston and Atlanta, Johnston was to be first destroyed.

The movements on both sides of the Alleghanies were to be simultaneous. Sherman and Butler and Meade were to begin operations on the same day; and while one absorbed the rebel attention at the West, the others would occupy all the energies of the enemy at the East, so that neither rebel army should be able to reinforce or support the other. If Johnston showed signs of joining Lee, Sherman was to follow him up to the extent of his ability, and Meade would prevent the concentration of Lee upon Sherman, if it was in the power of the army of the Potomac to do so. Sherman was also assured that he would not be called upon to reinforce Meade; no corps would be subtracted from his army at a critical

\* "You I propose to move against Johnston's army, to break it up, and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against his war resources."—*Grant to Sherman, April 4, 1864.*

moment ; his movements would be disturbed by no demand for his troops from the general-in-chief ; and he, in his turn, must expect to draw all additions to his own strength solely from the recruits that might be forwarded him from the rear. The only reinforcement he could expect from Grant was in the certainty that the rebels would not be allowed to add to Johnston's army from any Eastern force.\*

Banks was at this time in command of an expedition west of the Mississippi river, in which ten thousand of Sherman's troops were also engaged, and nearly as many more had been ordered to co-operate under Steele. Grant had opposed this whole campaign from the beginning, but it was ordered in spite of him ; and, before his elevation to supreme command, thirty thousand troops were on their way, accompanied by a fleet of gunboats under Admiral Porter, and had advanced so far up the Red river that it was unadvisable to recall them. He, therefore, directed Banks at once to consummate the object of his campaign,—the capture of Shreveport ;

\* "What I want more particularly to say is, that if the two main attacks, yours and the one from here, should promise great success, the enemy may, in a fit of desperation, abandon one part of his line of defence, and throw his whole strength upon a single army, believing that a defeat with one victory is better than a defeat all along the line, and hoping at the same time that the army meeting with no resistance will rest perfectly satisfied with their laurels, having penetrated to a given point South, thereby enabling them to throw their force first upon one and then upon the other. With the majority of military commanders, they might do this. But you have had too much experience in travelling light, and subsisting on the country, to be caught by any such ruse. I hope my experience has not been thrown away. My directions, then, would be, if the enemy in your front shows signs of following Lee, follow him up to the full extent of your ability."—*Grant to Sherman, April 18, 1864.*

and, if this should prove impracticable, to restore Sherman's men immediately, even if it led to the abandonment of the expedition. Whether Shreveport fell or not, Banks was to turn over the defence of the Red river to Steele and the navy, to abandon Texas and fortify securely on the Mississippi; and then to move promptly with all the remainder of his force, and, in co-operation with Farragut's fleet, attack Mobile. He would thus open up a new base for Sherman, emerging from his southward march, and in the meantime distract the rebels in that commander's front, and, it was hoped, compel Johnston to divide his force in order to defend Mobile. In a word, Banks was to play nearly the same part in relation to Sherman, that Butler was to play for Meade.

But in conjunction with these main movements against Johnston and Lee, Grant was anxious to employ as many as possible of his other troops, which were necessarily kept somewhat in the background, guarding the extended line between the loyal states and the rebel armies. Twenty-six thousand men were held for the protection of West Virginia and the frontier of Maryland and Pennsylvania. These could not be withdrawn without exposing the North to invasion from the Valley of the Shenandoah, an avenue which throughout the war was a constant menace to every army that defended Washington. Grant, however, was unwilling to leave so large a body of troops only negatively employed. He believed that by moving towards the front they would better protect the territory to which they were assigned than if they remained in garrison. They would thus, not only forestall any active operations of the enemy in their own neighborhood, but probably compel Lee



to detach largely from his main force in order to protect his communications and supplies ; for the Valley of the Shenandoah, one of the most fertile regions in America, was a very reservoir of grain for Richmond until the closing months of the rebellion. Sigel was accordingly directed to concentrate all his available force into two expeditions, one to move direct into the Valley of Virginia, and the other, by a more westerly route, against the East Tennessee railroad, along which many of their most important supplies were brought to the rebel capital and army.

Thus every man at the East would be employed. Troops would be interposed in every direction between the rebels and the territory which must under all circumstances be guarded,—that around Washington, that in West Virginia, and that at the mouth of the James ; and these same troops would be combined in simultaneous attacks, all tending towards the point which was the acknowledged centre of the military theatre.

All other operations of the national armies were to be suspended while these important campaigns were prosecuted. No outside issues were to distract attention from these essential ones. The forces elsewhere must rest on their arms, or content themselves with maintaining the positions already occupied, while the issue of the war was determined mainly in Georgia and Virginia. This very cessation made the contest more dramatic, the troops on both sides deserting, as it were, the ramparts of the rebellion, to watch the last struggle while it was fought out at the citadel. Thus every soldier's face was turned towards Richmond, and even Sherman had the same eventual objective point as Meade. "Whichever army,

East or West, should first destroy its antagonist, Grant always meant to bring to the assistance of the other. Meade on the Rapidan, Sherman on the Tennessee, Butler on the James, Sigel in West Virginia, and even Banks in Louisiana, were to push on from whatever direction, against whatever obstacle, to the core.\*

The outlines of this plan were communicated only to Grant's most important or most trusted subordinates. As has been seen, they were not divulged, even to the government, and the government was content to remain uninformed. Meade and Butler necessarily received explicit instructions, and learned the relations which the campaign of each would bear, not only to the other's movements, but to the general scheme. Sigel and Banks also were apprised very fully of the part they were to perform, while Sherman, of course, was in the full confidence of his chief. To no others, except to members of his personal staff, did Grant impart a knowledge of his plans; and, even among these, there were some with whom he was reticent.

Three days after his return to Washington, Grant took the field in person with the army of the Potomac, establishing his head-quarters at Culpeper, a little country town, not fifteen miles from the Rapi-

\* "So far as practicable, all the armies are to move together, and towards one common centre."—*Grant to Meade, April 9, 1864.*

"It is my design, if the enemy keep quiet and allow me to take the initiative of the spring campaign, to work all parts of the army together, and somewhat towards a common centre."—*Grant to Sherman, April 4.*

"I will direct the date of their departure hereafter, and the point at which they will strike, making the movement simultaneous and co-operative with movements elsewhere."—*Grant to Sigel, March 24.*

dan. The tents of fifty thousand soldiers were scattered in the neighboring valleys and whitening all the hill-sides, while further west, on a clear day, the peaks of the Blue Ridge might be seen, peering out of their misty shrouds, and patches of snow still lingering on their rugged sides. Until this snow should entirely disappear, the country people all declared the heavy rains of spring would not cease, nor the roads be passable; and eagerly those distant slopes were scanned, while the movements of mighty armies waited for the sign which hitherto had been watched only by farmers anxious for speedy crops or early ploughing time. Southward, a line of uneven heights intervened between the national camps and the stream that separated them from the rebel army; for the hostile pickets alike drew water from the Rapidan.

The ground was historic all around. Bull Run, the first important battle of the war, was fought not thirty miles in rear of Culpeper; Cedar mountain, the scene of one of Banks's fights, was in full view on the western front; and McDowell, Pope, Hooker, Burnside, Meade, and Lee, by turns, had led their armies up and down these very fields, and made the landscape desolate. Outside the town, not a house nor a fence, not a tree was to be seen, for miles, where once all had been cultivated farm-land, or richly wooded country. Here and there, a stack of chimneys or a broken cistern marked the site of a former homestead, but every other landmark had been destroyed. The very hills were stripped of their forest panoply, and a man could hardly recognize the haunts familiar to him from his childhood.

This desert extended almost from Washington to



the Rapidan. At rare intervals it was broken by groups of buildings near a railway station, or where a hamlet had been left for military purposes, to serve as the head-quarters of a command or for a depôt of ordnance or supplies. Culpeper was at one of these stations, and, during the war, had changed masters several times. From this spot, Grant issued his orders to all the soldiers of the republic. Hither came to him reports from Banks on the Red river, and from Sherman at Chattanooga; from Butler at Fort Monroe, and from Sigel in West Virginia. His staff officers were sent to all these generals to carry instructions that could not so well be given in writing; and the telegraph, that revolutionizer of modern war, brought him despatches daily of the doings of his armies a thousand miles away. Once, he visited Butler's command in person; and every week or oftener, he went to Washington, to make known his wishes to the government, and to direct the hurrying to the front of soldiers and supplies. Meade he saw constantly, explaining his plans for the coming campaign, and authorizing a complete reorganization of the army of the Potomac. Several important changes in the composition of that army had been proposed before Grant's promotion, but all received his sanction now; for, in such matters, he desired to leave his important commanders very nearly independent. All was, indeed, eventually submitted to him, but he seldom overruled the detailed plans of those to whom the great trusts were confided.

The army of the Potomac now consisted of three corps of infantry; the Second, under Major-General Hancock, the Fifth, under Major-General Warrens

and the Sixth, under Major-General Sedgwick ; all officers of military education and experience, all men of decided soldierly ability and reputation.\* The cavalry corps was placed under Sheridan. Grant had long been convinced that this arm of the service was capable of a higher degree of efficiency than it had yet attained, and that this efficiency would depend greatly, if not altogether, on the personal character of its commander. During one of his first visits to Washington, he had dwelt upon the necessity of finding an energetic, brilliant man for the position ; he described the vigor, the promptness, the fire, the persistency that he required ; and Halleck, who was present, asked : " How would Sheridan do ? " " The very man I want," said Grant, and telegraphed for him that hour. Sheridan was then commanding a division of infantry in the army of the Cumberland, and expected to remain with the troops that he had led for more than a year ; his acquaintance with Grant was not intimate, and he was in reality disappointed at being transferred to the field where he was destined to acquire one of the most splendid reputations of the war. The President and the cabinet at this time had hardly heard his name ; but Grant had noticed him when he commanded only a regiment ; he knew of his gallantry at Chickamauga ; and at Chattanooga had witnessed the conspicuous vigor with which he attacked, and then pursued the enemy. His confidence in Sheridan's generalship originated there.

Meanwhile, the Ninth corps, under Burnside, was brought back from East Tennessee, to co-operate directly with Meade, and was massed at Annapolis,

\* See Appendix for detailed organization of army of the Potomac.

in Maryland, a point from which various expeditions had already set out by sea since the beginning of the war. The destination of the corps, however, was not at first made known either to Halleck or to its own commander ; and up to the last moment, the country believed that Burnside was to lead an expedition into North Carolina. Such a movement was, indeed, strongly urged upon Grant by several prominent officers ; and, before visiting the East, he had himself inquired of Halleck whether it might not be advisable to send a column into North Carolina, to operate directly towards the south of Richmond.\* Halleck had invited his suggestions, and upon a survey of the maps, this plan seemed feasible ; but, after once arriving at the field of operations, Grant had no thought of dividing his armies further than was unavoidable. Of his own accord to seek a separation of his strength, seemed to him like tempting fortune. His strategy was always that of bringing to bear upon a certain point all the force he could command ; he did not necessarily select the enemy's weakest point, but rather that which was vital, and, therefore, perhaps, likely to be best defended ; but he threw his entire strength upon this point, and repeated the blows until all was ended. On this principle he had hitherto acted, and on this principle he still intended to wage war.

While Burnside was thus ready, without knowing it, to support the army of the Potomac, Gillmore had been brought with every man that could be spared from the Department of the South, and added to Butler's command. This was now composed of two corps, the Tenth, under Gillmore, and the Eighteenth,

\* See Appendix for Grant's letter on this subject, and its origin.



under W. F. Smith, an officer in whose ability Grant had, at that time, great confidence.\* Gillmore, it had not been originally intended to take from the Department of the South, but when it became apparent that active operations in his command were to cease, and his troops were to be transferred to another theatre, with true soldierly spirit he at once requested permission to accompany his men, although he foresaw that his own relative importance must be diminished by the change. Butler, whom Grant found in command of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, was not a professional soldier, and his military career had not been brilliant, but his energy was great, his ability undoubted, and his political influence such that the government was unwilling to disturb him. Grant, therefore, did not insist on his removal.

As Fort Monroe was to be Butler's base, and Richmond necessarily his objective point, there were in reality only two lines of operation open to him, the one on the north, and the other on the south side of the James. The former lay along the peninsula formed by the York and the James rivers, and had been the road followed by McClellan in the disastrous campaign of 1862; it would probably enable Butler to communicate more readily with Meade, but presented no other marked advantage; while the latter, threatening the communications of both Lee and Richmond with the entire South and West, was at

\* At the express solicitation of the general-in-chief, Smith was nominated by the President for the grade of major-general, but his confirmation, which had been already twice rejected by the Senate, was again resisted, until Grant's desire became known, when the Senate promptly agreed.

once selected by Grant. He always meant, indeed, to place the army of the Potomac itself on the south side of the James, if Butler failed to secure possession of the railways; and all the preparations were made for this contingency, which from the outset Grant regarded as not impossible. He expected himself to defeat, but hardly to destroy the army of Northern Virginia, in the battles north of Richmond; to drive it back sooner or later within the rebel capital, and then, having reduced its numbers, and worn out its strength, so that it could not seriously threaten Washington, to throw the bulk of Meade's forces south of the river, and across the railroads.

I remember well the rainy night at Culpeper when he explained to me this plan. Placing his fingers on the little spot on the map at the angle of the James, as if his army extended from the river below to the river again above Richmond, "When once my troops are there," he said, "Richmond is mine. Lee must retreat or surrender." \* I inquired if such a movement would not uncover Washington, but he replied that Sigel and Augur's forces would sufficiently protect the capital until reinforcements could arrive; and he meant so to cripple Lee, that by the time the rebels had retreated into Richmond, they could not detach troops enough to endanger Washington, without risking the existence of their own army and capital.

As early as the 1st of April, Grant visited Butler at Fort Monroe. He had already selected the line of operations on the James, but before disclosing his own intentions, permitted Butler to explain his views,

\* It was one year before Grant's troops were "there;" but on that day Richmond fell, and, nine days after, Lee surrendered.

and was gratified to ascertain that he also preferred the route by the south side of the river.\* He pointed out to his subordinate the importance of obtaining possession of Petersburg, the position of which, as a railway junction, made it in reality the key to Richmond; and of destroying the railroads themselves as far south as possible; but Richmond he made the especial objective point of Butler's campaign. When Petersburg and the railways were gained, Richmond indeed must fall; therefore, by all means, gain Petersburg and the railways. But Richmond itself might be captured at once, if not allowed to be reinforced; and as the army of the Potomac was to move simultaneously with Butler, Lee would be unable to detach from his command for the defence of the city, and the rebels had no troops elsewhere that they could bring up in time to meet a rapid and skilful movement on the south side of the James.

On the 2nd of April, and before leaving Fort Monroe, Grant instructed Butler in writing,† and on the 16th, he wrote again to him from Culpeper: "All the forces that can be taken from the coast have been ordered to report to you at Fort Monroe by the 18th, or as soon thereafter as possible. What I ask is, that with them, and all you can concentrate from your own command, you seize upon City Point, and

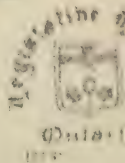
\* "I went to Fortress Monroe for the express purpose of seeing you, and telling you that it was my plan to have the force under you act directly in concert with the army of the Potomac, and as far as possible towards the same point. My mind was entirely made up what instructions to give, and I was very much pleased to find your previously conceived views exactly coincided."—*Grant to Butler, April 16, 1864.*

† See Appendix for this letter in full.



act from there, looking upon Richmond as your objective point. . . . If it should prove possible for you to reach Richmond so as to invest all on the south side of the river, and fortify yourself there, I shall have but little fear of the result." Again, on the 18th: "I will, as you understand, expect you to move from Fortress Monroe, the same day General Meade starts from here. I will telegraph you as soon as it can be fixed. . . . You also understand that, with the forces here, I shall aim to fight Lee between here and Richmond, if he will stand. Should Lee, however, fall back into Richmond, I will follow up and make a junction with your army on the James river. Could I be certain that you will be able to invest Richmond on the south side, so as to have your left resting on the James above the city, I would form the junction there. . . . I would say, therefore, use every exertion to secure a footing as far up the south side of the river as you can, and as soon as possible."

Grant did not at once determine whether to move the army of the Potomac by the right flank or the left, attempting to turn Lee above, or below his position on the Rapidan. On the 9th of April, he said to Meade: "Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee's army goes, you will go also. The only point upon which I am in doubt is whether it will be better to cross the Rapidan above, or below him. . . . By crossing above, Lee is cut off from all chance of ignoring Richmond and going north on a raid. But, if we take this route, all we do must be done whilst the rations we start with hold out. We separate from Butler, so that he cannot be directed how to co-operate. By the other route, Brandy station can be used as a base of supplies, until



another is secured on the York or James river." The country between Washington and Richmond had been lived upon and fought over for now three years, and was far too bare to furnish supplies for an army; provisions sufficient for a campaign must, therefore, be carried with the troops, if they moved westward, and this necessity would at once prevent either rapid or protracted operations. A movement to the right, would resemble that in the Vicksburg campaign, but with increased dangers and fewer advantages; for the rich western fields, from which Grant had been supplied in Mississippi, had no rivals in impoverished Virginia; while the requirements of an army like that of the Potomac, a hundred thousand strong, were incomparably greater than those of a force of only thirty thousand.

Grant accordingly decided to move by his own left flank, and towards the right of Lee. On the 29th of April, he wrote to Halleck: "My own notions about our line of march are entirely made up. But, as circumstances beyond my control may change them, I will only state that my effort will be to bring Butler and Meade's forces together. The army will start with fifteen days' supplies. All the country affords will be gathered as we go along. This will, no doubt, enable us to go twenty or twenty-five days without further supplies, unless we should be forced to keep in the country between the Rapidan and the Chickahominy, in which case supplies might be required by way of the York or the Rappahannock rivers.\* . . . *When we get once established on the James river,†*

\* This is what actually occurred a month later.

† Those who have contended that Grant made an entire change in his plans upon arriving at the James, of course knew nothing of

there will be no further necessity of occupying the road south of Bull Run." To Meade, on the same day, he wrote, "*Should a siege of Richmond become necessary*, ammunition and equipments can be got from the arsenals at Washington and Fortress Monroe."

Most of Grant's orders to Meade at this time were verbal, as their head-quarters were not ten miles apart, and the two commanders saw each other almost daily. This immediate presence of the lieutenant-general made it impracticable to leave Meade as independent as he would otherwise have been, or as Grant would have preferred, and, indeed, at first intended; but, after this time, no movement of importance was made by the army of the Potomac without the sanction of Grant. The whole campaign against Lee was his, and the whole responsibility. But, although the recognition of this fact, and the overshadowing rank of the general-in-chief, necessarily drew from Meade much of the attention of the country which he would otherwise have received, and to which his zeal and ability fairly entitled him, he never for this allowed his zeal to flag, or failed to exert his entire ability—another instance of that rare and patriotic unselfishness which he so constantly displayed.

The more distant commanders, however, Grant meant to leave, in all the details of their operations, quite as untrammelled as he himself had hitherto been. He, indeed, assigned them their objective points and their armies; told them what they were to do, and gave them the means with which to do it; but the use of those means, the accumulation of their own supplies, the tactics of their battles, and his plans at the time (April 29), when he wrote, "When we get once established on the James river."



in some degree the strategy of their own campaigns—these were left to each commander's judgment. When officers of the highest rank were acting under his own eye, he felt himself entirely responsible, and whether it was Sherman, or Sheridan, or Thomas, or Meade, invariably directed even detailed movements, and never found his great subordinates object to such a course; but those whom he entrusted with separate commands, he deemed it unadvisable to hamper with minute instructions. Each man's individual genius was thus developed, and each man's proper pride aroused. "I do not propose," he said to Sherman, "to lay down for you a plan of campaign, but simply to lay down the work it is desirable to have done, and leave you free to execute in your own way. Submit to me, however, as early as you can, your plan of operations."

His principal anxiety on Sherman's account was in regard to supplies, an anxiety in which Sherman fully shared. "I am resolved," he said, "when General Grant gives the word, to attack Johnston in the manner I have hitherto described, if our men have to live on beef and salt." "If Banks can at the same time carry Mobile, and open up the Alabama river, he will in a measure solve the most difficult part of my problem—provisions." He evidently remembered Grant's experience in the Vicksburg campaign, and his own, more recent, in the Meridian raid, when he said: "If the enemy interrupt my communications, I will be absolved from all obligations to subsist on our own resources, but will feel perfectly justified in taking whatever and wherever I can find. . . Georgia has a million of inhabitants; if they can live, we should not starve."

Indeed, an absolute confidence in his chief, which

was equalled only by a loyal determination to render him every possible support, breathes through all of Sherman's utterances. "That we are now all to act on a common plan, converging on a common centre, looks like enlightened war." "From me you shall have thorough and hearty co-operation." "Glad I am that there are minds now at Washington able to devise. . . I now know the result aimed at; I know my base, and have a pretty good idea of my lines of operation. No time shall be lost in putting my forces in mobile condition." "I would ever bear in mind that Johnston is at all times to be kept so busy that he cannot in any event send any part of his command against you or Banks." "I believe I have the men and the ability to march square up to the position assigned me, and to hold it." "I will be ready at the drop of a hat, to cross the Tennessee and pitch in."

Every soldier knows how reluctantly a general parts with his troops; but when it was found necessary to leave ten thousand of Sherman's men with Banks, he wrote: "I did want A. J. Smith on the Tennessee. . . but Banks cannot spare him, and Grant orders me to calculate without him;" and he proceeded to calculate accordingly, without a murmur. Nor did he think himself too great to ask advice. Sending some of his plans to Grant's chief of staff, he said, what no little man in his position would have said: "Please read these papers and communicate their substance to the General, as I have more faith in his judgment, as to the measure of strength to make certain military ends, than in my own." With such subordinates a chief could hardly fail.

It was at this time proposed that a corps in Sherman's command should be offered to Buell,

who had not been in active service for more than a year; the government believing that he had not acted with sufficient vigor in the campaign of Perrysville. Buell's political opinions were also opposed to those of the administration, and were thought by some to have influenced his action in the field. Grant, however, did not share the suspicion, and the command of a corps was accordingly offered to Buell. That officer, however, declined to serve under a junior, although the law expressly gave the President the right to assign any general officer to command his senior, and by virtue of that law, Thomas and Hooker were at this very time serving under Sherman, their own junior, and Hurlbut also under McPherson, whom he out-ranked. Upon the receipt of Buell's reply, Grant at once recommended his dismissal from the army. The order was promptly made.\*

Almost simultaneously, Grant was urged by the friends of both McClellan and Fremont to offer commands to those generals, each of whom occupied a prominent political position; each was an opponent of the administration, and each was looked upon as a candidate for the Presidency, though by widely different parties. To all these solicitations Grant steadily replied, that if the government chose to send to him either Fremont or McClellan, he would promptly provide those officers with commands, but he preferred, himself, to make no application in behalf of either.

On the 4th of April, he wrote in regard to Sigel's movement: "From the expedition from the Department of West Virginia, I do not calculate on very great results, but it is the only way I can take troops

\* Buell was mustered out of the Volunteer service May 23rd, and resigned his commission in the regular army June 1st.



from there. With the long line of railroads Sigel has to protect, he can spare no troops except to move directly to his front. In this way he must get through to inflict great damage on the enemy, or the enemy must detach from one of his armies a large force to prevent it. In other words, if Sigel can't skin himself, he can hold a leg while some one else skins." To Sigel himself, he said: "Destroy the East Tennessee and Virginia railroad, so that it may be of no further use to the enemy during the rebellion. Anything else that can be accomplished in the way of destroying what may be useful to the enemy in prolonging the war, will be well."\* He did not appreciate the policy of spending blood and life to gain advantages which the means were left the enemy to re-acquire.†

The rebels, meanwhile, had not remained altogether idle. Towards the end of March, an advance was

\* "In the spring campaign it is desirable to bring into the field all the troops possible. From the extended line you have to guard, no troops can be taken from you, except to act directly from your line towards the enemy. In this way you must occupy the attention of a large force (and thereby hold them from reinforcing elsewhere), or must inflict a blow on the enemy's resources which will materially aid us. This being the case, it is not necessary that the exact line marked out by me should be followed. It was selected with a view of keeping your present line covered."—*Grant to Sigel, April 18, 1864.*

† I do not desire too much to interrupt the progress of my narrative by detailed proof of its correctness, and must therefore refer the student to the Appendix for many orders and despatches, in addition to those quoted in the text, in support of my statements. But, though thus supported, the statements are made from my personal knowledge and from my memory of events, fortified by the recollection of my brother staff officers. Documents are the proof, not the basis of this history.

made by their cavalry under Forrest, in West Tennessee. The whole region south of the Ohio and west of the Tennessee had by this time become comparatively unimportant for military purposes, and, except at the forts along the Mississippi, had been stripped of national troops in order to concentrate them at more critical points, so that Forrest found little to oppose him. Union City, in Kentucky, was captured on the 24th of March, with its garrison of four hundred and fifty men, and Paducah, on the Ohio, was attacked the same day; but at the latter place the rebels were unable to gain possession of the forts, and after holding the town for a few hours were obliged to retire.

On the 26th of March, at the first intelligence of Forrest's advance, Grant telegraphed to Sherman: "Forrest should not be allowed to get out of the trap he has placed himself in at Paducah. Send Grierson with all your cavalry, with orders to find and destroy him wherever found." Sherman replied on the 28th, that he had already ordered Forrest to be pursued, "no matter what the odds." On the 12th of April, however, a portion of the rebel force, under Forrest himself, attacked Fort Pillow, on the Mississippi river, which was garrisoned by a detachment of Tennessee cavalry and a regiment of colored troops. The garrison fought bravely, but the works were finally carried by assault, and, after the defenders had thrown down their arms, the rebels proceeded to an inhuman and merciless massacre. In the words of Forrest's official report, "the river was dyed with the blood of the slaughtered for two hundred yards. . . . The approximate" [national] "loss was upwards of five hundred killed, but few of the

officers escaping. My loss was about twenty killed. . . . It is hoped that these facts will demonstrate to the Northern people that negro soldiers cannot cope with Southerners." In this contest Forrest had fifteen hundred men engaged against seven hundred. He captured two hundred horses, but "the officers in the fort were killed."\*

The rebels, however, were unable to hold the point, distant as it was from any supporting force, and after a week or two, Forrest was compelled to withdraw altogether from Kentucky, having accomplished nothing by his expedition but to associate his name for ever with an unnecessary and unmilitary barbarity. On the 15th, Grant said to Sherman, "If men have been murdered after capture, retaliation must be resorted to promptly." But although anxious to punish Forrest, he did not intend to be diverted from his own aims by this effort of the enemy, and telegraphed to Sherman: "I would not spare infantry intended for your main column to go after Forrest; but if you can make the cavalry force strong enough to cope with him, it would be well. . . . Forrest must be driven out, but with a proper commander in West Tennessee, there is force enough now. Your preparations for the coming campaign must go on." Sherman, however, assured him: "I will not let Forrest draw me off from your main plans,

\* The extracts in the text are from Forrest's first despatches on this subject, those of April 15th and 19th. Afterwards (April 26th), he prepared another report, in which he failed to dilate on the "river dyed with blood," and the inability of colored soldiers to "cope with Southerners." This last report Mr. Jefferson Davis recommended for publication, "in refutation of the slanders which have been promulgated by the government of the enemy in relation to the conduct of our gallant and humane soldiers."



in which I am to knock Joe Johnston, and do as much damage to the resources of the enemy as possible." Sherman made his plans and issued his orders with a view to intercept Forrest's retreat, but the inefficiency of subordinates allowed the rebel cavalry to escape without serious damage.

At the East, also, the rebels were bestirring themselves. Plymouth, in North Carolina, at the mouth of the Roanoke river, and Washington, at the mouth of the Pamlico, were points in regard to which Grant had said to Halleck: "It appears to me there is no use of our holding Washington and Plymouth. It would be better to have the forces necessary to garrison those two places added to Butler's column of attack, which, if successful, will give back to us, not only the coast, but probably most of the state. . . . I wish you would inquire of General Butler if the two points above mentioned can be abandoned as well as not; and if so, give the orders." On the 19th of April, he said to Butler: "General Peck should be able to hold Plymouth with the force he has. You, however, will have to be the judge of what is best to do. The moment you move from Fort Monroe, all rebel forces threatening along the North Carolina coast will be withdrawn."\* Again, on the 22nd, when it had become evident that the rebels were attempting offensive operations in North Carolina: "You must not let movements of the enemy interrupt your carrying out your programme in the coming campaign. It would be better to evacuate Washington and Plymouth than to have your whole force neutralized defending them." On the 24th, he said: "A Richmond paper of the 22nd, brought in by a

\* This is exactly what occurred two weeks later.

deserter, reports the capture of Plymouth. . . I do not think it advisable to attempt the recapture, if it is true;" and to Halleck, on the 25th: "I want General Butler to hold Newbern at all hazards,\* but would prefer him to remove everything from Washington, to having our little forces in North Carolina picked up in detail, or being forced to abandon our offensive operations to defend them." This last clause gives the key to Grant's whole policy in regard to smaller places. He was always willing to abandon them for the sake of greater ones, sure that to acquire possession of the important positions would speedily secure that of all dependent points. The necessity of sacrifice for the sake of commensurate gain was one that in all things he well understood, and the responsibility he was always ready to assume.

Plymouth was captured on the 22nd of April, and in obedience to Grant's instructions, Washington was shortly afterwards evacuated. These gleams of success at the East and the West afforded some encouragement to the rebels, and seemed to the great body of the people at the North like unmitigated disasters. They, who were ignorant alike of the magnitude of Grant's plans and of the principles of military strategy, could not perceive that episodes such as these had no bearing whatever on the result at which he was aiming, and which they desired.

A far more important disaster was that which occurred in Louisiana. In order to fully appreciate

\* Grant desired to hold Newbern as a possible base for a movement into the interior of North Carolina. It threatened the great southern line of railway communication in that state, and was the point from which, nearly a year later, a column of Schofield's army set out to meet Sherman as he marched north through the Carolinas.

the occurrences at the South-West, and their relation to the events of 1864, the military situation of the preceding year must be borne in mind. Grant, it will be remembered, was at that time commanding the Department of the Tennessee, fighting and winning the Vicksburg campaign ; while Banks, at the head of about fifty thousand men, occupied Southern Louisiana, with a jurisdiction extending as far into Texas and Mississippi as his arms could penetrate : Steele commanded the Department of Arkansas, Rosecrans was at the head of the army of the Cumberland, moving offensively upon Chattanooga, and Halleck, at Washington, was supposed to control them all. From the time of the fall of Vicksburg, or even earlier, the germ of the idea of the Red river campaign had been floating in Halleck's brain. In his original instructions to Banks, of November 9th, 1862, when that officer was about to assume command of the Department of the Gulf, Halleck directed him, after capturing Vicksburg and destroying the railroads at Jackson and Marion, "to ascend with a naval and military force the Red river as far as it is navigable, and thus open an outlet for the sugar and cotton of Northern Louisiana ;" and on the 22nd of July, 1863, when Grant, in the same despatch which announced the result of the Vicksburg campaign, suggested : "It seems to me now that Mobile should be captured," Halleck replied : "Before attempting Mobile, I think it best to clear up a little. Johnston should be disposed of, also Price and Marmaduke,\* so as to hold the line of Arkansas river. This will enable

\* Both Price and Marmaduke were at this time operating west of the Mississippi.



us to withdraw troops from Missouri ; also assist Banks in clearing out Western Louisiana. When these things are accomplished, there will be a large available force to operate either on Mobile or Texas." It was the old story. Grant was anxious to complete his work by the acquisition of the only important position left to the rebels on the Gulf of Mexico, the relations of which with the coming campaign from Chattanooga were so apparent ; while Halleck was bent on repairing the strongholds already captured rather than attacking new ones, and the offensive operations which he did propose, after "clearing up for a while," were half a dozen distant and scattered movements, the complete success of which would hardly have assisted to terminate the war.

Accordingly, on the 31st of July, 1863, the Thirteenth corps was subtracted from Grant's command, and ordered to the Department of the Gulf ; and on the 22nd of August, Halleck described the line of "operations suggested to General Banks—viz., to ascend the Red river to Shreveport." On the 10th of the same month, he had urged upon Banks "a combined naval and military movement up the Red river to Alexandria." This recommendation was renewed in a score of subsequent despatches, but although repeatedly indicating his preference for such an expedition, Halleck expressly informed Banks that his "choice was unrestricted ;" it was "not intended to tie his hands or hamper his operations in the slightest degree." Banks again and again objected to the movement,\* but Halleck invariably answered

\* See Banks's despatches, *passim* ; as published in "Report of Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War ;" Vol. II., 1865.

his objections, and yet always failed to order the campaign.

At the same time, and by direction of the Secretary of War, Banks was peremptorily ordered to restore the national flag to some point in Texas with the least possible delay. "Do this by land, at Galveston, Indianola, or at any point you may deem preferable."\* Early in September, therefore, Banks made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain possession of the Sabine pass; but two months later, a second expedition, directed against the mouth of the Rio Grande, met with somewhat better fortune. Halleck, however, disclaimed any responsibility for either operation, rebuked Banks, and wrote to Grant that both movements had been "unexpected, and contrary to the advice of the government."† After each attempt he again exhorted Banks to undertake a campaign in the Red river country, and the latter finally, and not unnaturally, looked upon these repeated recommendations from a superior as equivalent to orders.

Steele, who was in command of the Department of Arkansas and independent of Grant, was also at this time actively engaged west of the Mississippi; and, on the 9th of September, Halleck ordered Grant "to watch Steele's movements and give him

\* "Mexican and French complications render it exceedingly important that the movement ordered against Texas should be undertaken without delay."—*Halleck to Banks, August 20, 1863.*

† Halleck undoubtedly allowed Banks to see that he preferred a movement from Shreveport against Texas, to one directed from the coast; but as he again and again gave Banks "unrestricted choice of his line of operations," if only some point in Texas were occupied, the language quoted in the text was not warranted.

See Appendix for extracts from despatches of both Halleck and Banks.

all necessary assistance. His expedition is a most important one, and must not fail. If Steele and Banks succeed, all Trans-Mississippi must return to the Union." Although the Thirteenth corps had been transferred to Banks's command, General Halleck was still unsatisfied, and, on the 13th of September, he inquired if it "would not be well to instruct McPherson," then in command of the Seventeenth corps, "to assist, if necessary, General Banks's forces on the lower Mississippi." But on the very day of this last inquiry, the misfortunes which had been threatening Rosecrans and finally culminated at Chickamauga, compelled Halleck to telegraph that all of Grant's disposable force must be sent to assist the army of the Cumberland; and from that time until the close of the Chattanooga campaign, no more was said about the reinforcement of Banks.

Grant, however, had always disliked this scattering of forces in search of a new objective point, when the real one was so palpably at hand; and, on the 7th of December, as soon as Chattanooga and Knoxville were secure, he wrote to Halleck: "It may now safely be assumed that the enemy are driven from this front. I propose, with the concurrence of higher authority, to move by way of New Orleans and Pascagoula, on Mobile. I would hope to secure that place by the last of January. It seems to me this move would secure the entire states of Alabama and Mississippi and a part of Georgia, or force Lee to abandon Virginia and North Carolina."\* But on the same day, Halleck had returned to his accustomed strain, and while Grant was urging a campaign against Mobile, his superior telegraphed:

\* See Appendix for this despatch in full.



"Would it not be well to instruct McPherson to assist Banks?"\* To this, Grant replied, also on the 11th: "I will instruct McPherson to use his force to best advantage to keep open the Mississippi, either in or out of the Department." On the 17th, Halleck answered the suggestion of a movement against Mobile, intimating that Grant had enough to do in East Tennessee; but, if not, "from present appearances, General Banks will need all the assistance you can give him just now on the lower Mississippi, and in Louisiana." On the 20th, Grant telegraphed to Halleck: "I will send Sherman down the Mississippi. I will write you the plan for clearing the Mississippi valley, and all plans at present determined on."

Meanwhile, Mr. Charles A. Dana, then a confidential agent of the War Department, had been spending some time at Grant's head-quarters, by direction of the government. He returned to Washington at this juncture, possessed very fully of Grant's views in regard to a campaign against Mobile, and on most other military subjects, and commissioned by Grant to lay them in full before his superiors. On the 21st of December, Mr. Dana telegraphed: "I have had conversations with the President, the Secretary of War, and General Halleck, with respect to your project of a campaign in Alabama. It meets the full approval of them all in every respect, not only because it keeps your army active during the otherwise useless weather of the winter, but because it appears to them well conceived, and as certain of producing the desired effect as any plan can be. . . . You would be authorized to proceed immediately with its

\* McPherson was at this time at Vicksburg, in command of the Department of the Tennessee.

execution but for the anxiety which seems to exist respecting East Tennessee. If Longstreet were expelled from that country, you could start for Mobile at once." Not a word here about Banks or the lower Mississippi, but "I suppose General Halleck will communicate with you fully on this subject."

General Halleck had communicated with Grant on this subject, exactly an hour and a half before, and this is what he said: "As I understand from your despatch of the 7th, and from conversation with Mr. Dana, you propose: 1st. To expel the enemy from East Tennessee, and to provide against his return into the valley. 2nd. To either force the rebels further back into Georgia, or to provide against their return by that line into Tennessee. 3rd. To clear out West Tennessee. 4th. To move a force down the Mississippi and operate against Mobile. The importance of these objects is considered to be in the order above stated. It is thought that *the fourth should not be definitely determined upon* till the other three are accomplished, or their accomplishment made reasonably certain. Moreover, circumstances may be such by the time that your spare forces reach Port Hudson or New Orleans as to require their services west of the Mississippi. If so, the latter part of the plan would be somewhat varied, or its execution delayed."

It is difficult to conceive a more complete emasculation of a military plan than this version of Grant's proposition returned to him by the general-in-chief. After reading Grant's despatch of the 7th of December and this reply, one is no longer at a loss to understand the succession of disasters which occurred while Halleck remained in command of the national armies. On the 23rd. however, Grant

addressed the general-in-chief, modifying his plans in conformity with the views of his superior: he no longer urged an attack on Mobile, but gave instead the outlines of the operations which he proposed to commit to Sherman east of the Mississippi—those known afterwards as the Meridian raid.

Nevertheless, it was not until the 8th of January, 1864, that Halleck really developed to Grant his project for the Red river campaign, which, however, he had already communicated to Banks and Steele and Sherman.\* After premising that a movement by

\* On the 4th of January, Halleck said to Banks: "Generals Sherman and Steele agree with me in opinion that the Red river is the shortest and best line of defence for Louisiana and Arkansas, and as a base of operations against Texas. If, as soon as you have sufficient water in the Atchafalaya and Red rivers, you operate in that direction, Steele's army and such forces as Sherman can detach should be directed to the same object; the gunboats also should co-operate:" and, on the same day: "So long as your plans are not positively decided upon, no definite instructions can be given to Sherman and Steele. The best thing, it would seem, to be done under the circumstances is for you to communicate with them, and also with Admiral Porter in regard to some general co-operation. All agree upon what is the best plan of operations, if the stage of water in the rivers and other circumstances should be favorable." Grant, it has been seen, did not agree. Again, on the 11th: "The best military opinions of the generals in the West seem to favor operations on the Red river. I presume General Sherman will communicate with you on the subject."

I find it impossible to reconcile these and similar despatches with the directions to subordinates to defer to Grant, and the constant assertions: "I do not wish to change any directions you may have given;" "I leave it entirely to your judgment to determine how and to what extent assistance can be rendered," etc. But Halleck never seemed to know how to apply the principles which he was always enunciating. He talked constantly of concentration when he was scattering most widely, and of committing everything to Grant, at the very moment when in reality, though perhaps unconsciously, he was undermining Grant's authority.



Banks against Texas was considered by the President a political necessity, and that, although it perhaps offered fewer military advantages than a campaign against Mobile, yet it was positively ordered by the President\*—he went on to say: "It is to be considered whether it will not be better to direct our efforts for the present to the entire breaking up of the rebel force west of the Mississippi, rather than to divide them by also operating against Mobile and Alabama. If the forces of Smith, Price, and Magruder could be so scattered or broken as to enable Steele and Banks to occupy Red river as a line of defence, a part of their armies would probably become available for operations elsewhere. General Banks reports his present force as inadequate for the defence of his position; and General Steele is of opinion that he cannot advance beyond the Arkansas or Sabine, unless he can be certain of co-operation and supplies on the Red river. Under these circumstances, it is worth considering whether such forces as Sherman can move down the Mississippi should not co-operate with the armies of Steele and Banks on 'the west side.'" This was his reply to Grant's proposition to use Sherman east of the Mississippi.

On the 7th of January, Steele's command, which had hitherto been independent, was made subordinate to Grant, and Steele was informed: "It is hoped that means may be concerted between yourself and General Sherman and General Banks, to drive the enemy entirely out of Arkansas, and then

\* It is noteworthy that when Grant, two months later, superseded Halleck in supreme command, no word was said to him by the President, the Secretary of War, or any member of the government, in regard to the political necessity for a Texas campaign.

occupy the line of Red river."\* Halleck, at this time and afterwards, was in direct communication with both Steele and Sherman, and both these officers were instructed to correspond freely with each other, with Banks, and with Admiral Porter, in regard to the proposed campaign. In consequence, many and important communications passed between Halleck and both Sherman and Steele, of which Grant remained in ignorance.† ‡

\* After informing Steele that his command would be placed under the orders of Grant, Halleck went on to say, "but you will communicate as usual with these head-quarters. You will also communicate as usual with General Grant in regard to all military movements, in order that there may be a complete understanding and co-operation of all the forces in the Mississippi valley. It is quite possible that a combined movement of your corps and the troops under Major-General Sherman may be determined on, and if so, it is deemed proper that General Grant should direct it. It is hoped that means may be concerted between yourself and Generals Sherman and Banks to drive the enemy entirely out of Arkansas, and then occupy the line of Red river."

† The only intimation Grant received of this correspondence was in the single sentence of Halleck's letter to Steele, given in the last note: "It is hoped that means may be concerted," etc. A copy of this letter was furnished to Grant.

Sherman and Steele, being authorized by Halleck, were of course guilty of no insubordination in communicating thus directly with each other and with Banks. Sherman's despatches to Banks always defer to Grant, and again and again he makes all his co-operation contingent on Grant's approval.

‡ "Generals Sherman and Steele agree with me in opinion that the Red river is the shortest and best line of defence for Louisiana and Arkansas, and as a base of operations against Texas. If this line can be adopted, most of the troops in Arkansas can be concentrated on it. . . . If, as soon as you have sufficient water in the Atchafalaya and Red rivers, you operate in that direction, Steele's army, and such forces as Sherman can detach, should be directed to the same object."—*Halleck to Banks, January 4.*

"I immediately put myself in communication with General

As, however, Halleck still refrained from countermanding the expedition into Mississippi, Grant continued his preparations, and, on the 15th of January, he wrote: "Sherman has gone down the Mississippi, to collect at Vicksburg all the force that can be spared for a separate movement from the Mississippi. He will probably have ready by the 24th of this month, a force of twenty thousand men that could be used east of the river. *But to go west, so large a force could not be spared.*" Although strictly subordinate, and intending to obey, if the orders became positive, Grant fought the scheme as long as he could, consistently with his soldierly obedience. He went on to say: "The Red river and all the streams west of the Mississippi are now too low for navigation. I shall direct Sherman, therefore, to move out to Meridian with his spare force." Halleck replied on the 17th, discouraging Sherman's movement, but not absolutely prohibiting it. This was his usual course, to recommend, not to order; to discourage, not to countermand. But so bent was he on a campaign west of the Mississippi, that *he actually proposed to abandon all offensive operations in Virginia*, for the sake of acquiring Arkansas and Texas. On the 19th

Sherman and General Steele, receiving from them despatches the substance of which has been transmitted to you, and stating that they would be ready to co-operate with me in the movement up the Red river, by the 1st of March. I had informed them that I would be ready to move at that time, and have sent an officer to communicate with General Sherman, if he can be found, or General Steele and Admiral Porter, upon the same subject and to the same effect. . . . If General Steele alone can co-operate with me, I shall move my column by the 5th of March. I am daily expecting despatches from him upon this subject."—*Banks to Halleck, February 25.*



of January, he said to Grant: "My opinion has been and still is that all troops not required to hold our present position in Virginia and on the Atlantic coast should be sent to you and General Banks, for operations this winter, and as preparatory to a spring campaign. I hoped that by this means, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana would be secured, and the rebel forces in Texas be so reduced and hemmed in, as to give us but little trouble hereafter." In the same despatch, he said: "I hope to send some men to General Banks. There is, however, much difficulty and delay in obtaining transportation by sea. This makes it still more important that the navigation of the Mississippi should be well protected, and that Sherman and Steele so operate as to assist Banks as much as possible."

Nothing more on this subject passed between the two generals until the 4th of February, when Grant telegraphed: "Sherman left Vicksburg the 27th." On the 15th, he inquired: "Is Banks preparing an expedition up the Red river? I ask, because in that event it will not be necessary for me to send, as I contemplated doing, on Sherman's return to the river." If it were possible, he still meant to reserve his troops for the Georgia campaign. On the 16th, he said: "General Allen telegraphed me that General Banks had taken large amounts of river transportation to New Orleans, preparatory to a move up Red river, also that a staff officer was collecting transportation for Sherman for the same move. I expected Sherman to go to Shreveport in conjunction with Steele's movements, if Banks had not the force to send. I would suggest that Sherman himself go in command, if a part of

his troops go." Halleck's reply, dated February 16th, was in these words: "According to Banks's last despatch, February 7th, as soon as General Sherman's present expedition is terminated (about the 1st of March), it was understood that he and General Banks would move up Red river to meet Steele's advance against Shreveport. This was General Banks's plan, if Generals Sherman and Steele could co-operate with him. General Sherman had agreed, but Steele not yet heard from. The time of movement would depend upon the stage of the water in Red river. It was understood that as soon as Generals Sherman and Banks effected a junction on that river, General Sherman's army could be withdrawn to operate east of the Mississippi. Will not the probable delay in expelling Longstreet from East Tennessee justify the adoption of this plan of Generals Banks and Sherman?"\* General Banks reports his force too weak to advance without General Sherman's aid." Again, on the next day: "I have

\* It is manifestly unfair to call this the "plan of Generals Banks and Sherman." Banks had been urged on to the expedition ever since he had taken command of the Department of the Gulf, and Sherman had been ordered to communicate with Banks in regard to co-operation in a campaign on the Red river. All that originated with either was that Banks was unwilling to undertake the movement until he was promised the co-operation of both Sherman and Steele; while Sherman insisted that his troops must be withdrawn in time to rejoin Grant in the Georgia campaign: Sherman also, who knew the Red river well, had advised the delay of the expedition until the water should rise sufficiently to enable the gunboats to ascend. This allowed him to carry out Grant's views and set out on the Meridian raid, before engaging in the operations west of the Mississippi.

But the original idea, the plan of a campaign on the Red river, and the combination of the three armies, these were Halleck's own.

given no orders to Sherman in regard to his movements, but requested him to communicate freely with Banks and Steele, in regard to concert of action. I presume from Banks's despatches that Sherman proposes to go in person to assist in effecting a junction between Banks and Steele on Red river. By last despatch he was waiting an answer from Steele."

Thus it seems that Grant received from Halleck, or in reality from Banks, the first intelligence of important movements made by his own subordinates; Halleck authorizing, suggesting, advising, urging operations, but neither to Grant, to Banks, nor to Sherman giving positive orders; appointing no head to the triple campaign,\* criticizing and rebuking his subordinates when they failed to carry out his views, but avoiding the responsibility of ordering the very movements which he had been planning for a year.

On the receipt of this last communication from his superior, Grant, however, felt that he had no option left, and on the 18th, he despatched a special messenger to Sherman with copies of the correspondence; adding: "Whilst I look upon such an expedition as is proposed as of the greatest importance, I regret that any force has to be taken from east of the Mississippi for it. Unless you go in command

\* "I never received authority to give orders to General Steele. My instructions limited me to communication with him upon the subject of the expedition. His orders he received from other sources."—*Statement submitted by General Banks to Committee on Conduct of the War, March 28, 1865.*

"The column of General A. J. Smith was a partially independent command. His orders were dated: 'Head-quarters Red river expedition, steamer Clara Bell.' He never declined co-operation with me, nor did he receive orders from me. He made no official reports of his forces or their operations."—*Ibid.*



of the proposed expedition, I fear any troops you may send with it will be entirely lost from service in this command. I can give no positive orders that you send no troops up Red river, but what I do want is their speedy return if they do go, and that the minimum number necessary be sent. I have never heard a word from Steele since he has been placed in the Military Division. Do not know what he proposes, nor the means he has for executing. The time necessary for communicating between here and Vicksburg being so great, you will have to act in this matter according to your own judgment, simply knowing my views." When Sherman received this letter he had returned successful from the Meridian expedition, and in conformity with the instructions of Halleck to "confer freely with Banks," had gone to New Orleans for the sake of a personal interview.\* Thither Grant's letter followed him, and, using the discretion it conferred, he agreed to lend Banks ten thousand troops for the Red river movement, expressly stipulating that they should be returned in time for Grant's spring campaign. "Inasmuch as General Banks goes in person," he said to Grant, "I could not with delicacy propose that I should command." Banks was the senior. Sherman therefore entrusted his troops to Brigadier-General A. J. Smith, and set out himself for Huntsville, "to put his army in the field in shape for the coming spring campaign."†

Before this reply to Grant's despatch arrived,

\* With his usual careful and soldierly subordination, Sherman wrote in advance to notify Grant of this visit to New Orleans.

† See Appendix for highly important letter of Sherman to Banks, of 4th of March.

the author of this history was sent to Sherman, with orders for him to assemble his command at or near Memphis: "Have them in readiness to join your column on this front in the spring campaign." This order purposely contained no allusion to the Red river operations, General Grant explaining to me when I started, that he still hoped to avoid a participation in the movement for any of his troops except those of Steele.\* I delivered my despatches to General Sherman on the 9th of March, but Smith's column was already on its way to Alexandria. The first news of this disposition of his troops reached Grant at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, on the 12th, as he was returning from Washington, having received his commission as lieutenant-general.

This, then, was the condition of the Red river campaign when Grant took command of all the armies. It had been conceived and planned by another, it was entered upon before he became general-in-chief, in opposition to his known views, and ten thousand of his own troops were engaged in it without his approbation and almost without his knowledge.† But the movement had now gone so

\* I first reported in person to General Grant, as aide-de-camp, in February, 1864, and can testify personally to the anxiety he then felt in regard to this movement; how anxious he was, if possible, to keep his troops from participation in it, how little confidence he had in its success, and how subordinate he considered that success, even if attained, to the result of the great campaign in Georgia.

† It cannot be too explicitly stated that Sherman's course in all this matter was fully authorized by the instructions of Halleck, and that his loyalty to his immediate superior is conspicuous throughout the entire correspondence. He saw indeed the necessity for greater unity of command, and on the 4th of January, advised Halleck to give Grant the supreme control of the Mississippi valley. "The whole matter," he said, "would be simplified."

far that the composite army could not be withdrawn without a battle. The aggressive operations of the national forces had brought out and concentrated the rebel troops hitherto scattered over the entire region west of the Mississippi, and those whom what Grant called the "*Let alone policy*" had demoralized, had now become a threatening and active organization. The safety of Banks's column demanded the co-operation of A. J. Smith and Steele; and though lamenting the necessity, Grant felt himself compelled to sanction the abstraction of Smith's command from Sherman's army, foreboding that it would be of little further use in the spring campaign. Steele's troops, it is true, were required on the western side of the Mississippi, to protect the state of Arkansas, and they might as well be employed offensively, as remain in garrison; but the loss of so many of Sherman's best men at the very outset of the campaign was a heavy blow. All that Grant could do, however, was to hope that they might be returned in time for the operations in Georgia.

On the 15th of March, three days after assuming command of the armies, Grant telegraphed to Steele: "Move your force in full co-operation with Banks's attack on Shreveport. A mere demonstration," which Steele proposed, "will not be sufficient. Now that a large force has gone up Red river, it is necessary that Shreveport and the Red river should come into our possession." The same day he wrote to Banks: \* "It will be my desire to have all parts of the army, or rather all the armies, act as much in concert as possible. I regard the success of your present move as of great importance in reducing the number of troops

\* Telegraphic communication with Banks was at this time impossible.



necessary for protecting the navigation of the Mississippi river.\* It is also important that Shreveport should be taken as soon as possible. This done, send Brigadier-General A. J. Smith with his command back to Memphis as soon as possible. . . . Should you find that the taking of Shreveport will occupy ten or fifteen days' more time than General Sherman gave his troops to be absent from his command, you will send them back at the time specified in his note of the 4th of March, even if it leads to the abandonment of the main object of your expedition. Should your expedition prove successful, hold Shreveport and the Red river with such force as you may deem necessary, and return the balance of your troops to the neighborhood of New Orleans. Commence no move for the further acquisition of territory, unless it be to make that now ours more easily held. This of course is not intended to restrain you from making any disposition of your troops and going anywhere to meet and fight the enemy. *I look upon the conquering of the organized armies of the enemy as being of vastly more importance than the mere acquisition of territory.* . . . It may be a part of the spring campaign to move against Mobile. It certainly will be, if troops enough can be obtained without embarrassing other movements."

On the 28th of March, however, Grant learned that Banks, who was to have been at Alexandria on the 17th, to meet the force from Sherman's army, had on the 19th, not yet left New Orleans. He at once proposed that a new military division should be created, to include the departments of Missouri,

\* Grant's reason for deeming the expedition of importance is noteworthy.

Arkansas, Kansas, and the Gulf. "It is important," he said, "to have some one near Banks who can issue orders to him and see that they are obeyed." By this arrangement Banks would have had an immediate superior at hand. But the suggestion did not meet with the favor of the President.

On the 31st, therefore, the lieutenant-general wrote again to Banks, renewing the instructions already given, and especially urging dispatch. "Concentrate at least twenty-five thousand men of your command for operations against Mobile. Lose no time in making a demonstration to be followed by an attack upon Mobile. It is intended that your movements shall be co-operative with movements elsewhere, and you cannot now start too soon. Commence the concentration of your forces at once."\* On the 4th of April, however, Sherman wrote to Grant: "General Banks positively agreed with me that our troops should form a junction on the 17th of March. Mine were there in time, capturing Fort de Russey en route; but it seems that Banks did not leave New Orleans until March 22nd.† This is not right.

\* See Appendix for Grant's letter to Banks of March 31st, in full.

† General Banks stated to the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War that the President had directed him to assist in the reorganization of civil government in Louisiana, and he accordingly remained at New Orleans, and dispatched Franklin with sixteen thousand men to Alexandria; Franklin was to start on the 5th of March, and be at Alexandria to meet Smith, on the 15th or 17th; but he was not ready to move till the 13th, and arrived at Alexandria on the 26th. Banks was there in person on the 24th.

On the other hand, General Franklin stated to the same committee, that he was not informed until the 10th that he was expected at Alexandria on the 17th; and as he was then one hundred and seventy-five miles from that place, it was impossible for him to fulfil General Banks's promise.

This failure in time in conjoint operations is wrong, because it endangers the troops that punctually obey orders. I rightfully claim my ten thousand, with General A. J. Smith, at the time agreed on ; viz. : thirty days after the time they entered Red river."

On the 13th of April, the reply of Banks to Grant's despatch of March 15th was received, and filled the general-in-chief with apprehension ; for instead of announcing his return to New Orleans, Banks proposed, after capturing Shreveport, to pursue the rebels into Texas.\* Grant at once telegraphed to Halleck : " Please send General Hunter to report to me. From the last despatches from General Banks, I fear he is going to be late in his spring movements, and I am desirous of sending an officer of rank with duplicates of his orders and further instructions." On the 17th, accordingly, General Hunter left Culpeper with despatches for Banks, who, however, was informed by Grant : " It is not intended that General Hunter shall give orders in my name, further than the instructions addressed to him are such orders ; but to express more fully my views than I can well do on paper, and to remain with you until such time as you will be able to say definitely at what time you will be able to commence your

\* " We hope to be in Shreveport by the 10th of April. I do not fear concentration of the enemy at that point ; my fear is that they may not be willing to meet us there ; if not, and my forces are not weakened to too great an extent, I shall pursue the enemy into the interior of Texas, for the sole purpose of destroying or dispersing his forces, if in my power, keeping in view the necessity of the co-operation of some of my troops east of the Mississippi, and losing no time in the campaign in which I am engaged. Until we reach Shreveport it will be impossible to form any definite plan of operations." —*Banks to Halleck, April 2.*



movements against Mobile.\* I would much rather the Red river expedition had never been begun than that you should be detained one day after the 1st of May in commencing your movement east of the Mississippi. If you have commenced to move from Shreveport to the interior of Texas, or away from the Red river in any direction, retrace your steps on receipt of this. No matter what you may have in contemplation, commence your concentration, to be followed without delay by your advance on Mobile." These peremptory orders must have seemed strange to Banks, accustomed as he was to despatches from Halleck which left him "unrestricted choice of his field of operations," and were "not intended to tie his hands or hamper his movements in the slightest degree."

Only three days after Hunter had left Culpeper, the news arrived that Banks had suffered a great defeat. The plan of operations west of the Mississippi was complicated in the extreme. In addition to the seventeen thousand men of Banks's own command marching north, and the ten thousand under Smith moving west, nineteen gunboats were advancing up the Red river under Admiral Porter, conveying a fleet of transports with supplies, while Steele was to move simultaneously with seven thousand troops from Arkansas, also against Shreveport. But the elements were hostile, and the expedition was detained eight days at Alexandria, even after the arrival of Banks, waiting for a rise in the river, which had not been so low for twenty years; the gunboats and

\* The instructions to General Hunter, so far as they were not a recapitulation of those to Banks, consisted of details for the disposition of various forces, which subsequent events rendered, in the main, inapplicable.

transports were thus unable to ascend until the 3rd of April. This gave the enemy time to concentrate and prepare to resist the movement. On the 6th, the combined forces of Banks, Smith, and Porter arrived at Grand Ecore, and Banks pushed out at once as far as Pleasant Hill, thirty-eight miles in the interior. On the 7th, his advance came in contact with a rebel force, and after two hours' fighting, drove it from the field. The enemy, however, made a second stand, the same afternoon, eight miles beyond, and was again compelled to withdraw. But, on the 8th, the rebels attacked in force, and defeated Banks, capturing nineteen pieces of artillery and an immense quantity of wagons and supplies. During the night, Banks fell back to Pleasant Hill, and the enemy pursuing, another battle was fought on the 9th, in which, however, the rebels were repulsed with heavy loss. But the Red river expedition had come to a disastrous end. The supplies were captured, the troops disorganized, and that night Banks continued his retreat as far as Grand Ecore: thence, he fell back to Alexandria, which place was reached on the 27th, the gunboats of course withdrawing with the army. At Alexandria, however, a serious difficulty arose. The river was again falling, and Porter's vessels found not water enough to float them over the rapids. It seemed as if this great Mississippi squadron, which had performed such important service and won so glorious a record, must be destroyed by its own officers, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy. But, by the genius of Lieutenant-Colonel Bailey, an officer of the Volunteers, and the assistance of the army, this great disaster was averted. An immense dam with wings

was constructed, and the channel of the river was so narrowed and deepened that the entire fleet passed over the rapids safely. Bailey was made a brigadier-general as a reward for his brilliant achievement.

When the news of Banks's misfortune arrived at Culpeper, the general-in-chief was greatly chagrined. All his carefully elaborated plan was disarranged; Sherman could now expect no co-operation from Banks, and Johnston would be at liberty to concentrate his entire force against the army moving from Chattanooga; thirty thousand men were rendered useless during six of the most important months of the military year, and the great combination of campaigns was inaugurated with disaster.\* On the 22nd of April, Grant telegraphed to Halleck: "I have been satisfied for the last nine months that to keep Banks in command was to neutralize a large force and to support it most expensively. Although I do not insist on it, I think the best interests of the service demand that General Reynolds† should be placed in command at once, and that he should name his own successor to the command of New Orleans." The same day, he said to Sherman: "Despatch just received from General Brayman satisfies me of what I always believed, that forces sent to Banks would be lost to our spring campaign. You will have to make

\* As the Red river campaign was neither planned nor fought under General Grant's directions, it forms no part of his "military history." My task in connection with it, therefore, is limited to a statement of his course when the scheme was proposed, as well as while it was in preparation, and a recital of the actual events of the expedition, so far only as they affected or disturbed his general plan.

† Major-General Joseph J. Reynolds was at this time in command of the Defences of New Orleans, and, of course, a subordinate of Banks.



your calculations now, leaving A. J. Smith out. Do not let this delay or embarrass you, however." Then, with his usual optimism, he added: "He may return in time to be thrown in somewhere very opportunely." On the 22nd, also, he directed Sherman to notify Steele of the situation of Banks, for Steele was now left in imminent danger, cut off entirely from those on whose co-operation he had been instructed to rely.

On the 25th of April, Halleck telegraphed: "I have just seen Admiral Porter's despatch, dated April 14th. . . He fears that if Smith is withdrawn, Banks will retreat still further, and Steele's command and the gunboats will be greatly perilled, if not lost. He protests against the withdrawal of Smith at this time, as it would be fatal to us."\* Grant replied: "Smith will have to stay with Banks until the gunboats are out of their difficulty. Banks ought to be ordered to New Orleans, and leave all further execution on Red river in other hands." The report of Banks arrived on the 24th, and announced his intention of renewing the campaign: "An advance will be commenced immediately, and upon a line differing somewhat from that adopted first, and rendering the

\* "I have just seen Admiral Porter's despatch, dated Grand Ecore, April 14th, to Navy Department. He says, whatever may be said, the army there has met with a great defeat, and is much demoralized. He speaks in strong terms of Banks's mismanagement, and of the good conduct of A. J. Smith and his corps. He fears that if Smith is withdrawn, Banks will retreat still further, and Steele's command and the gunboats above the rapids (which from fall of water cannot be withdrawn), will be greatly perilled, if not lost. He says Banks's army was ten days beyond the appointed time. He protests against the withdrawing of Smith at this time, as it would be fatal to us. The Navy Department asks to know this, in order to telegraph instructions to Cairo for Admiral Porter. What shall I reply?"—*Halleck to Grant, April 25.*

column less dependent upon the river.”\* But Grant at once telegraphed to Halleck : “ I would send orders to General Steele to return to Little Rock ; to General Banks to return himself immediately to New Orleans, and make preparations to carry out his previous instructions, the moment his troops returned ; to place the senior officer under himself in command of the troops in the field, with instructions to see the gunboats safely out of Red river as soon as possible, and then return all the troops rapidly to where they belong.” Orders were accordingly sent by Halleck, to this effect.†

During the last year of the war, while Grant was actually in the field, most of his orders to important subordinates were transmitted first to Halleck, and by him repeated in Grant’s name. So, also, many of the reports of generals at a distance were addressed originally to Halleck, as chief of staff, and then forwarded to Grant. The lieutenant-general, himself, was obliged to send all his telegrams to Washington, as his only line of communication lay through that city ; and he therefore proposed that, for the sake of uniformity, all his messages for the government should be addressed to the chief of staff of the army. In consequence, very few communications passed direct between the general-in-chief and the President or the Secretary of War.‡

On the 26th of April, Halleck informed Grant : “ Your telegram of the 22nd, asking for the removal of

\* Banks, however, had abandoned the idea of an advance before he received the countermand.

† See Appendix for Halleck’s letter to Banks, of April 27th.

‡ There were some notable exceptions to this rule, which will be mentioned in their place.

Banks, was submitted to the President, who replied that he must await further information before he could act in the matter. If General Banks is withdrawn from the field, General Franklin will be the senior officer left."

On the 27th, further despatches, dated April 17th, arrived from Banks, again declaring that he entertained no thought of a retrograde movement, and asking for the co-operation of Steele in another campaign against Shreveport; but Grant telegraphed to Halleck, on the 28th: "General Banks's despatch of the 17th received. I do not see that better orders can be given than those sent a few days ago. If Banks has not advanced to Shreveport and beaten the enemy, then Steele will be so exposed to a superior force as to make it necessary to reinforce him. I would order, in this event, A. J. Smith's whole force to Steele. Banks, by his failure, has absorbed ten thousand veteran troops that should now be with Sherman, and thirty thousand of his own that should have been moving towards Mobile; and this without accomplishing any good result."\*

As the news from Banks grew worse and worse, and the now inevitable delay became more and more apparent, Grant finally telegraphed, on the 29th: "On due reflection, I do not see that anything can be done this spring with troops west of the Missis-

\* On the 16th of April, A. J. Smith wrote to Banks: "I have received orders from Major-General W. T. Sherman, commanding Military Division of the Mississippi, to return immediately with my command;" but this was at the moment when the peril of the navy was greatest, and when the army itself was not out of imminent danger, and Banks very properly took the responsibility of detaining Smith. "The safety of the navy and the army compel me reluctantly to withhold my consent to your departure."



issippi, except on that side." His disappointment at being obliged to come to this conclusion was extreme, but he said: "I think, therefore, it will be better to put the whole of that territory into one Military Division, under some good officer, and let him work out of present difficulties without reference to previous instructions." So far as the Trans-Mississippi force was concerned, this was of course an abandonment of the scheme by which Grant had hoped to make every man in the national armies work towards the accomplishment of one grand and common aim. "All instructions," he said, "that have been given, have been given with the view of getting as many of these troops east of the Mississippi as possible." But this was now past hoping for. Only those who were near him at the time, and acquainted with his plans, could fully appreciate the mortification and chagrin which in some degree they shared; the redoubled anxiety, because of the redoubled danger which every other portion of the armies must now incur; the vexation at unexpected difficulties, and at obstacles which might have been avoided; the disappointment at the marring of careful plans just as the long preparations seemed complete and active operations were ready to begin.

Halleck replied to Grant's renewed suggestion of a change in commanders: "Your telegram of 10.30 A.M. has been received and submitted to the Secretary of War. You do not name any officer for the Trans-Mississippi command. Did you propose to leave Banks in the general command, or only of his present department, or to supersede him entirely?" To this Grant replied: "I would leave Banks in command of his department, but order him to his

head-quarters in New Orleans. If you could go in person and take charge of the Trans-Mississippi division, until it is relieved from its present dilemma, and then place a commander over it, . . . I believe it would be the best that could be done. I am well aware of the importance of your remaining where you are at this time ; and the only question is which of the two duties is the most important.”\*

In answer to this, Halleck wrote, on the 2nd of May : “ Wherever you and the Secretary of War think I am of most use, I am ready to go. I am willing to serve anywhere and everywhere. Just at this present crisis it might not be well to derange the machinery here ;”† and on the 3rd, he said : “ In regard to changes in commanders west of the Mississippi, or the superseding of General Banks by placing Steele, Reynolds, or some other officer in general command, the Secretary of War has seen all your telegrams, and I believe they have all been read by the President. I have not, however, heard him say anything on the subject since his reply which I sent you, to your first telegram, immediately after the news of Banks’s defeat. General Banks is the personal friend of the President, and has strong political supporters in and out of Congress. There will undoubtedly be a very strong opposition to his being removed or superseded. And I think the President will hesitate to act unless he

\* See Appendix for this despatch in full.

† He went on to say : “ There must be some military head here to keep things from getting into a snarl. There must be some common head here to make the different bureaux act in concert and with promptness. It is impossible for the Secretary or his attendants to attend personally to these matters.”

has a definite request from you to do so, as a military necessity, and you designate his successor or superior in command. On receiving such a formal request (not a mere suggestion), I believe, as I wrote you a few days ago, he would act immediately. Do not understand me as advocating his retention in command. On the contrary, I expressed to the President some months ago, my own opinion of General Banks's want of military capacity. Whatever order you may ask for on this subject, I will do my best to have issued."\*

The order was not made, and Halleck, seeing the probability of still further delay, suggested to Grant that his instructions of the 27th to Banks and Steele should be modified, so that no troops should be withdrawn from the operations against Shreveport, and that those operations should be continued under the direction of the senior officer in the field, until further orders. This was necessary in order to prevent the confusion from becoming absolutely inextricable, and Grant replied: "Please send the order."†

And so, this great perplexity and obscurity remained. The cloud of a past and present disaster hung over the far West, and the efforts which Grant made to remove it were thwarted for political or

\* In January, 1865, while Grant was still in the field, Halleck was called upon to furnish to Congress copies of all correspondence in his possession, relative to the Red river campaign. He withheld his own letter of May 3rd, censuring Banks, but sent in every one from Grant of a similar character.

† "Lieutenant-General Grant directs that orders heretofore given be so modified that no troops be withdrawn from operations against Shreveport and on Red river, and that operations there be continued, under the senior officer in command, until further orders."  
—*Halleck to Banks and Steele, April 30.*



personal reasons. He had not brought on the campaign, he had not participated in it; and even when it culminated in misfortune, a misfortune not confined to its own theatre, but reaching to all of Grant's operations and interfering with all his plans, he was not allowed to take his own means nor to choose his own instruments to provide a remedy. Nevertheless, I never heard him utter a complaint against the President or the government because of their difference with him on this subject. He took it for granted that their political reasons were of sufficient force to control their action, and did not murmur. He even defended them when his officers, less patient than himself, expressed their discontent. And this, although he was no more of a politician than simply to wish success to the party which was identified with the cause of the Union. But under the weight of this gloom, heavy enough to depress any but the most buoyant spirit, he made his final preparations for the spring campaigns.

These preparations were now nearly complete. The various armies had all been reinforced, and arrangements made to keep them full after active operations should begin. Gillmore's troops had been brought from South Carolina, and Butler was massed at Gloucester Point, on the York river, in order that the enemy might suppose a movement was intended on the north side of the James. Sigel was ready to move south from Winchester, and his subordinates, Crook and Averill, south-east, from the Kanawha. Sherman had brought up his supplies to Chattanooga, and organized his command, and only awaited the order to start. Burnside was at last informed of his destination, and ordered to take posi-

tion between Bull Run and the Rappahannock, relieving the rear of Meade ; a fleet of ironclads, at Grant's request, was directed to co-operate with Butler in his movement up the James ; and only the rains which still continued in Virginia delayed the general advance. For some weeks after Grant assumed command, the stormy weather had facilitated rather than disturbed his plans ; he was not himself prepared to undertake active operations immediately, and was of course well-pleased that the enemy also was prevented from taking the initiative. But the delay was on some accounts unfortunate. The country was becoming impatient ; those who always censured declared Grant as slow as his predecessors ; the portion of the Northern press that never lost a chance to encourage the rebels or dishearten the loyal, condemned, of course ; and, even in the army of the Potomac, grumblers were to be found. There were those who said : " This Western man has not yet fought the greatest of the rebel leaders ; it remains to be seen whether his genius is equal to the new emergency ; " and, to men who had been long with Grant, and were therefore accustomed to victory, there seemed an undue appreciation of Lee's military ability. Then, too, among the officers who accompanied the lieutenant-general from the West, were some whose tact was not supreme. Young, spirited soldiers, whose experience had not taught them the necessity of the new system of entrenchments so universal at the East, commented upon the defences with which the army of the Potomac very properly surrounded itself, in a tone which was not calculated to stimulate good feeling ; the same men, before one week had passed, were glad to order

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entrenchments to be dug, when their commands were halted for half a day. Still, these were small matters, slight shades of feeling, and did not affect the temper of the troops. So far as those at headquarters could perceive, there was entire willingness to accept the new commander, and a hearty desire to co-operate with him and under him.

Late in April there were indications that Lee contemplated an advance by the Shenandoah valley, northward, and various despatches on the subject passed between Grant and Sigel and Meade. The chief would not have been displeased had such a movement been attempted, for he would thus have gained an opportunity to strike the rebels in motion and in flank. "I will follow," he said, "with force enough to prevent his return South." But Lee was too wary, and the advance was not made. It is probable that what Sigel observed was the movement of Longstreet's corps from East Tennessee to join Lee, at Orange court-house, which occurred about this time.

But at last, the mighty machine was ready in all its parts, to move. On the 27th of April, Grant announced to Meade: "General Burnside's command leaves Alexandria this morning to take position between Bull Run and the Rappahannock. You can give orders to your troops to move to the front as soon as relieved." The Ninth corps at this time did not form a part of the army of the Potomac, and separate orders were addressed to Burnside from Grant's headquarters. This arrangement originated in a desire to spare Burnside's feelings; he had himself commanded the army of the Potomac, and still out-ranked Meade, his old



subordinate ; he was permitted, therefore, to take his orders direct from Grant. To Halleck, Grant said : " Cannot the bridges between Bull Run and the Rappahannock be held when we move from here, by troops from Washington ? " On the 28th, he telegraphed to Butler : " If no unforeseen accident prevents, I will move from here on Wednesday, the 4th of May. Start your forces on the night of the 4th, so as to be as far up the James river as you can get by daylight on the morning of the 5th, and push from that time with all your might. Everything possible is now being done to accumulate a force in Washington from the Northern states, ready to reinforce any weak points. I will instruct General Halleck to send them to you, should the enemy fall behind his fortifications in Richmond." The same day he said to Sherman : " Get your forces up so as to move by the 5th of May." To Halleck, on the 29th : " General Burnside should not leave his present position between the Bull Run and the Rappahannock until the 5th of May."

On the 1st of May, Sigel informed Grant : " We will occupy Winchester to-day, with all our force, consisting of about four thousand infantry, one thousand cavalry, and three batteries, and push our advance towards Cedar creek." Grant replied : " I do not want you to move further south than Cedar river, to watch any movement the enemy may attempt by way of the Shenandoah. To cut New river bridge " [in South-Western Virginia], " and the " [rail] " road ten or twenty miles east from there would be the most important thing Crook could do." On the 2nd, he said to Sherman : " Move at the time indicated in my instructions.

All will strike together." To Butler, on the same day: "Start on the date given in my letter. There will be no delay with this army." To Meade, on the 3rd: "You will move according to the orders issued. Burnside knows the fact, and has certainly made arrangements for guarding his stores." To Burnside himself: "All of General Meade's troops will be away from Brandy station to-morrow morning." Finally, on the 3rd, at 12.30 P.M., he telegraphed to Halleck: "This army moves to-morrow morning."

That night Grant called his staff about him, and explained in detail his immediate plans; not only the far-reaching strategy which comprehended all the armies, but the tactical movements in which he intended to employ the forces under his own eye in Virginia. Questions were freely asked and answered as to the intentions of the chief in this event and in that contingency, about the disposition of troops at the East or West, as to the provision of supplies or reinforcements, and the routes of armies. Especially the plan for the morrow was set forth, and the naked little room of the Virginia homestead was filled with an anxious company. We were to start early; the advance would move at three A.M.; but the interview was prolonged far into the morning. The plan was so comprehensive, the result which hung upon it so stupendous, the chances were so various, the obstacles so formidable, that no man's spirit was buoyant, though all were trustful; all believed in the chief who had so often been victorious. He alone was imperturbable; and although he discussed the future fully and clearly, it was always calmly; and, marvel of all, he was not unwilling even then

to turn from these momentous themes to descant on the making of a fire or the qualities of a horse.

A day or two before he left Culpeper, he received this letter from the President :—

“ EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, *April 30, 1864.* }

“ *Lieutenant-General GRANT :*

“Not expecting to see you again before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express in this way, my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant ; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you: While I am very anxious that any great disaster or the capture of our men in great numbers shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know it.

“ And now with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you.

“ Yours very truly,

“ A. LINCOLN.”

To this Grant made the following reply :—

“ HEAD-QUARTERS, ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES,  
CULPEPER COURT-HOUSE, VIRGINIA, *May 1, 1864.* }

“ THE PRESIDENT :

“Your very kind letter of yesterday is just received. The confidence you express for the future and satisfaction for the past in my military adminis-



tration is acknowledged with pride. It shall be my earnest endeavor that you and the country shall not be disappointed. From my first entrance into the volunteer service of the country to the present day, I have never had cause of complaint—have never expressed or implied a complaint against the administration or the Secretary of War, for throwing any embarrassment in the way of my vigorously prosecuting what appeared to be my duty. And since the promotion which placed me in command of all the armies, and in view of the great responsibility and the importance of success, I have been astonished at the readiness with which everything asked for has been yielded, without even an explanation being asked. Should my success be less than I desire and expect, the least I can say is, the fault is not with you.

“Very truly, your obedient servant,

“U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*”

And so, supporting and cheering each other, literally bearing one another's burdens, the two chiefs of the nation advanced into the dim and shrouded future, like men walking towards the dawn; not too confident, yet with a consciousness of their own desire to do right, and relying on the bravery of their soldiers, the justice of their cause, and the overruling Providence of God.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Strength of armies of Potomac and Northern Virginia, May 4th, 1864—Position of Lee—Problem of Grant—Movement of army of Potomac—Crossing of Rapidan—Movement of Lee—Position of army of Potomac on night of May 4th—Grant's orders for May 5th—Warren encounters enemy—Dispositions of Grant—Description of Wilderness—Grant's head-quarters—Warren's advance—Warren's repulse—Grant rides to front—Gap between Warren and Hancock—Getty ordered to Warren's left—Hancock ordered to connect with Getty—Approach of rebels—Getty's attack—Hancock supports Getty—Indecisive result—Wadsworth's advance through Wilderness—So far, Lee out-generalled—Difficulties of the Wilderness—Confidence of Grant—Orders for 6th of May—Attack on Grant's right—Hancock's assault on 6th—Great success on left—Hancock's halt—Anxiety in regard to Longstreet—Delay of Burnside—Reinforcement of Hancock—Attack of Longstreet—Hancock's repulse—Enemy checked—Further delay of Burnside—Grant determines to move to Spottsylvania—Second attack on Hancock—Fire in the Wilderness—Success of Lee's right—Repulse of Lee's right—Burnside finally attacks—Movements of Warren and Sedgwick—Late attack on Sedgwick—Sedgwick driven back—Enemy retires—Grant's calmness—Results of battle of the Wilderness—Lee's feebleness in offensive movements—Losses of national army—Rebel losses never known—Disappearance of rebels from Grant's front on 7th of May—Movement ordered by left flank—Night march towards Spottsylvania—Enthusiasm of troops for Grant.

ON the 4th of May, 1864, Grant could put into battle on the Rapidan one hundred and sixteen

thousand eight hundred soldiers.\* Ninety-four thousand infantry, fourteen thousand cavalry, and eight thousand eight hundred artillerymen were reported as "present for duty equipped," with the army of the Potomac, and the Ninth corps. Three hundred and twenty-two guns accompanied the command. Lee's army at the same time numbered seventy-five thousand effective men, exclusive of the troops in the Valley and in the Defences of Richmond.† Of this

\* The exact figures are—

Army of the Potomac . . . . .	97,273
Ninth corps . . . . .	22,708
<hr/>	
Total . . . . .	119,981
Less Fourth division, Ninth corps (colored), never put into battle at this time . . . . .	3,095
<hr/>	
Leaving . . . . .	116,886

These figures are taken from a return prepared by the adjutant-general of the army for the Secretary of War, which was submitted with the following remark: "In explanation of the discrepancy between the figures given by the Hon. E. M. Stanton, in his report, dated November 22, 1865, as the available force present for duty May 1st, 1864, and the figures exhibited in the accompanying statement, it is deemed proper to say that the former included *all men present with their commands excepting the sick*, while the latter shows only those who were *actually present for duty equipped*." See note to page 32.

See Appendix for full returns of Army of Potomac and Ninth corps. See also Appendix for letter from Major-General Humphreys, chief of staff of Army of Potomac.

† The field return of the army of Northern Virginia now in existence, nearest in date to the 4th of May, 1864, is that of April 20th. In this, Lee's "effective total," equivalent to "the present for duty equipped" of the national returns, is reported as 53,891 men. Hoke's brigade in Ewell's corps, and two regiments of Rodes's division are, however, returned as "detached, not reported." The Valley District is also returned "not reported;" while, most important of all, Longstreet's corps, the "First" of the army of Northern Virginia, is not included in this return. During the month of April, however, two divisions of Longstreet, and a



number, about sixty thousand were infantry, nearly ten thousand cavalry, and five thousand artillery. The infantry was divided into three corps, under Longstreet, Ewell, and A. P. Hill ; and the cavalry was commanded by J. E. B. Stuart, one of the most brilliant of the rebel generals.

The army of Northern Virginia occupied an admirable defensive position on the southern bank of the Rapidan ; its front extended from the mouth of

battery of artillery, all of his original command then serving under him, were ordered from East Tennessee to report to Lee, and joined the army of Northern Virginia before the 4th of May. On the 12th of March, this force was officially stated by Bragg, then rebel general-in-chief, to amount to 14,000 "available" men. See letter of Bragg to General Jos. E. Johnston ; Johnston's "Narrative of Military Operations," page 293. The rebel General Early, in his "Memoirs of the Last Year of the War for Independence," page 18, states that Johnston's brigade of Rodes's division arrived from Hanover Junction and reported to him on the 6th of May ; he gives the strength of Rodes's entire division as 6,000, so that it is fair to put one brigade at 1,500. Hoke's brigade did not return to the army of Northern Virginia till the 22nd of May ; but it is certain that during the two weeks immediately preceding active operations, the rebel authorities were making prodigious efforts to increase Lee's strength, and that furloughed men and conscripts came in by thousands. See Appendix.

The calculation is as follows :—

Lee's return of April 20th . . . . .	53,891
Longstreet—on Bragg's authority . . . . .	14,000
Johnston's brigade of Rodes's division . . . . .	1,500
Reinforcements, conscripts and furloughed men, between April 20th and May 4th . . . . .	6,000
	<hr/>
	75,391

The assertions of the rebels and their friends in regard to the relative strength of the two armies on the Rapidan have been so inaccurate, that I invite particular attention to my statements, and to the authority on which they are made.

See Appendix for copy of Lee's return of April 20th. See also Appendix for estimate of Lee's strength made by General Humphreys. See also note to Chapter XIX.

Mine run on the east to the spurs of the Blue ridge on the west, and was protected by numerous field-works, as well as by the steep banks and difficult fords of the stream. The right, commanded by Ewell, was covered not only by Mine run itself, but by a strong entrenched line, outside of which lay an impenetrable region called the "Wilderness," a forest miles in extent, with few and narrow roads, and a dense and tangled undergrowth, the most impracticable country possible for the manœuvres of an army; the left, under Hill, was guarded by the Blue ridge and the Rapidan; while Longstreet, in the rear, was ensconced among the hills at Gordonsville. Thus, rivers and mountains and forests encircled and concealed and protected the movements and forces of Lee.

It was of course out of the question to make a front attack on an army thus strongly situated, and Grant's first problem was to force or tempt the rebels out of their works to fight.\* With this view, he decided to plunge direct into the Wilderness, and threaten the right of Lee. It was not his object to avoid the enemy; not even, as some have supposed, to pass beyond him; he did not desire to out-flank the rebel army, in a purely strategic sense, so much as to bring it to speedy battle. Lee could not possibly remain within his works when the national troops advanced, for that would be to abandon his communications and supplies; so that by moving to the right of the army of Northern Virginia, Grant really compelled either immediate battle or the imme-

\* It was the classic story over again. "If you are a great commander, come out of your works and fight me." "If you are a great commander, make me come out of my works and fight you."

diate retreat of Lee.\* Accordingly, the orders were issued for the army of the Potomac to cross the Rappahannock at Germanna and Ely fords, and to march into the Wilderness by the roads nearest the rebel lines.†

The troops were to carry fifty rounds of ammunition on the person, three days' bread and small rations in their haversacks, and to take three days' beef on the hoof. The supply trains were loaded with ten days' forage and subsistence. Soon after midnight, on the 4th of May, the army moved.‡ The advance was in two columns; Warren, on the right, took the road to Germanna ford, followed closely by Sedgwick, while Hancock had the left, and moved towards Ely's ford, six miles below. Wilson's division of cavalry preceded Warren, and Gregg's was in advance of Han-

\* The absurd idea that Grant hoped or desired to pass unobserved by Lee's right, and reach his rear without a battle, could never have been entertained by a soldier; yet the assertion has been made by some who had no knowledge of Grant's intentions, that his objective point was Gordonsville!

The front of the army of the Potomac was indeed turned towards Lee, who stood between Grant and Gordonsville; but Grant took the roads nearest Lee's lines in order to *provoke, not avoid*, a battle; as for Gordonsville, he had no more idea of going thither than to New Orleans, or to any other place a thousand miles away, towards which the front of his army might be turned. But those who maintained that he set out for Gordonsville, also maintain that, as he did not reach that point, he was foiled!

† The orders for the march, like all important field or marching orders, were issued by Meade, but submitted for Grant's approval. Those in question were drawn by General Humphreys, chief of staff of the army of the Potomac.

‡ It will be remembered that the army of the Potomac consisted of three corps, the Second under Hancock, the Fifth under Warren, and the Sixth under Sedgwick. The cavalry was commanded by Sheridan, and the Ninth corps, at this time an independent organization, was under Burnside. See Appendix to Chapter XV.



cock, to clear the way for the infantry and to seize the crossings and hold them until pontoon bridges could be laid; while Torbert, with the third division of cavalry, remained to cover the trains and picket the fords after the army should have passed. The artillery reserve and the trains were on the left of Hancock; and Burnside, now at Warrenton, was informed by Grant: "As soon as the crossing of Meade's army is perfectly assured, I will notify you of the fact, by telegraph, which will be the signal for you to start."

Before dawn Wilson had crossed the river and driven in the rebel outposts on the southern side, and by six o'clock a bridge was laid, and the cavalry was formed a mile beyond the ford. Gregg did as well at Ely's ford, and Warren and Hancock, following close, each found his crossing secured. From Orange court-house, where Lee's head-quarters were established, two roads run, nearly parallel, to Fredericksburg, striking the road from Germanna ford at right angles, in the very heart of the Wilderness. The one nearest the Rapidan is called the Orange turnpike, the other the Orange plank road. The Germanna road is about ten miles east of Mine run. As soon as the infantry reached the river, the cavalry moved out, Wilson by the Germanna road, towards Old Wilderness tavern, and thence to Parker's store on the Orange plank road, and Gregg to the left, in the direction of Chancellorsville. Warren pushed after at once, and by noon his advance was at the tavern, at the intersection of the Orange turnpike and the Germanna road, where he bivouacked for the night. Sedgwick crossed in the afternoon, and went into camp before dark on the hills south of the Rapidan, while Hancock proceeded to Chancellorsville, about six miles in

rear of Warren, and that night bivouacked on Hooker's battle-field of exactly a year before. The greater part of the trains, numbering more than four thousand wagons, had also crossed the river before night came on.

Grant started from Culpeper in person at about eight o'clock, and rode along the column amid the cheers of the troops whenever they recognized their new commander. They were evidently willing to fight under his leadership. The day was superb, the marching smooth and close, and the men were in fine spirits. Grant crossed the river immediately after the Fifth corps. His head-quarters were established in a deserted house on the heights that overlook the ford, and while Warren's bayonets filed off in the distance, glancing in the western sun, Sedgwick went into bivouac around him. Soon after mid-day, the enemy's signals had been read, announcing that Lee had discovered the movement and was taking the line of Mine run. Grant at once despatched to Burnside, at 1.15 P.M.: "Make forced march until you reach this place. Start your troops now in the rear the moment they can be got off, and require them to make a night march."\* It was at the same time determined that, early on the 5th, Sheridan should attack the rebel cavalry, in the neighborhood of Chancellorsville.

That night Grant sent word to Halleck: "Cross-

\* It has been stated that Grant was not aware of Lee's advance until noon of the 5th of May. He knew it twenty-four hours before that time, and ordered Burnside to make a night march in consequence.

"Enemy moving in some force. Coming out towards New Verdiersville."—*Humphreys to Hancock, May 4, 1 P.M.*

ing of the Rapidan effected. Forty-eight hours will now demonstrate whether the enemy intends giving battle this side of Richmond.\* Telegraph Butler that we have crossed the Rapidan." This successful initiative of the campaign Grant considered of great importance. He had always feared that Lee might oppose the passage of the river, and his most serious apprehensions were relieved, when the army with its huge and almost cumbersome train was safe on the southern bank of the Rapidan. Still, this was only the first step in the campaign. Three times before had the army of the Potomac crossed the same stream, under as many different commanders, and three times had been obliged to return. Grant, however, was not the man to trouble himself with inauspicious omens. His superstitions were always sanguine.

Meade's head-quarters were near those of the general-in-chief, and at night the two commanders discussed the plans for the morrow. While they were thus engaged, telegrams arrived, announcing that Sherman and Butler and Crook had all advanced. It had never happened before in the history of war that one man directed so completely four distinct armies, separated by thousands of miles, and numbering more than a quarter of a million soldiers; ordering the operations of each for the same day, and receiving at night reports from each that his orders had been obeyed. The co-operation so long desired and planned had at last begun.

The enemy, however, had been far from idle. As soon as Lee was informed that the army of the Potomac had crossed the Rapidan, he took bold and

\* This despatch sufficiently disproves the assertion that Grant expected to advance without a battle.



prompt measures to oppose it. The absolute passage of the river was probably a surprise, for he could not of course foresee the exact day which Grant would select for an advance ; but he must have long been convinced that no direct attack would be made on his front, and that a turning movement by one flank or the other was therefore inevitable. His plans in such an event were doubtless already laid, and he set out at once to strike Grant in flank as he was passing through the Wilderness. He was aware that the army of the Potomac had crossed the river at two points,\* and that its columns must be somewhat separated for a few hours after arriving on the southern side ; if he could attack before Hancock joined the heavier masses on the national right, he might permanently divide Grant's force, and drive it back across the Rapidan, as he had done when Hooker commanded the year before.

Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 4th of May, two corps of Lee's army were put in motion, Ewell on the Orange turnpike and Hill on the plank road, while Longstreet also came into the latter road from his camp near Gordonsville. By nightfall, Ewell had crossed Mine run, and bivouacked at Locust grove, four miles beyond. Thus, Warren and Ewell were advancing towards each other on the same road, and at dark their outposts were not five miles apart. But though hidden by the night and the density of the forest, they were yet half conscious of each other's presence, like blind men groping after an unseen foe.

Having ascertained that Lee had made a change

\* "The enemy crossed the Rapidan yesterday at Ely's and Germanna fords."—*Lee to Jefferson Davis, May 5.*

of front and was certainly advancing, Grant's orders for the 5th were to deflect the troops from their original line of march.\* The army now was to face west instead of south, so as to come in direct contact with the enemy; but in order to avoid the line of works along Mine run, which was of extraordinary strength, Grant turned the head of his column towards the new right of Lee. Wilson again had the advance, and was to move to Craig's meeting-house on the Catharpen road, keeping parties well out on all the roads on the left front and flank of the army. Warren was to follow as far as Parker's store, at the intersection of a wood road with the Orange plank road; his right was to extend to the Old Wilderness tavern, at which point Sedgwick would join him from Germanna ford. Hancock was directed to move from Chancellorsville to Shady Grove church, at the junction of the Catharpen and Pamunkey roads, and there rest his left, which would also be that of the entire army; on the right he was to connect with Warren at Parker's store. Burnside, now rapidly advancing from Warrenton, forty miles away, was ordered to form on the right of Sedgwick, and complete the line to the Rapidan. The army would thus extend from the river on the right to

\* As early as one P.M. on the 4th of May, Humphreys, Meade's chief of staff, sent the following despatch to Hancock: "Orders for march to-morrow will be sent this P.M. Some modification of order of movement has been made. Reserve artillery will close up. Your trains close up to reserve artillery, and those from Culpeper ford will park near Dowdall's. Torbert's division cavalry will cross at Ely's ford to-morrow at daylight, and move out and join Gregg. Let it have way when it joins Gregg. [All these movements were in the direction of the enemy.] Some few shots have been fired towards Robertson's tavern. Enemy moving in some force.—Coming out towards New Verdiersville."

Shady Grove church on the left, forming a convex line, and prepared to advance either to the west, or south, or to the south-west, as the movements of the enemy might make desirable. Sheridan, on the left and in rear of Hancock, was to attack the rebel cavalry at Hamilton's crossing. It was impossible to know Lee's intentions in advance, but the dispositions of Grant were calculated to develop them very speedily.

Warren's infantry was nearest the enemy, and, soon after six o'clock on the morning of the 5th, before the head of his column had arrived at Parker's store, the rebels were discovered in force. A regiment of Wilson's cavalry had already been swept away, and Crawford, who was in command of Warren's covering division, at once deployed his troops, while information was sent to the rear. Meade made his dispositions promptly, in accordance with Grant's previous instructions. Warren was ordered to halt his column and concentrate on the turnpike road, where the enemy had been discovered, and to attack any force in his front, as soon as his troops were in hand. Wright's division of Sedgwick's corps was at the same time directed to move by such wood-roads as could be found, and to take position on the right of Warren, joining in any attack that might be made. Getty's division of the same corps was to move to Warren's left, at the intersection of the Orange plank with the Brock road, and to hold that point at all hazards, until relieved. For the Brock road is the key to all this region; starting from the Germanna road, about two miles south of Old Wilderness tavern, it runs south-easterly and intersects first the Orange plank, and then the road from the Catharpen furnace; next,



it crosses the Catharpen road at Todd's tavern, after which it leads direct to Spottsylvania. Cutting all these transverse roads at right angles, it enabled whichever army held it to out-flank the other, and was, of course, of immense importance to both commanders. As soon, therefore, as the news of Lee's advance arrived, Hancock was halted at Todd's tavern,\* from which point he could be moved either along the Brock road to the support of Getty, or by the Catharpen road against the right flank of Lee, as events might render preferable.

Meade had gone on to the Wilderness tavern, at dawn, leaving Ricketts's division of Sedgwick's corps to cover the ford, while Grant remained at the river to direct the movement of Burnside, who, it will be remembered, was not under Meade's command. The general-in-chief was promptly informed of the approach of Lee, and, at 8.24 A.M., he sent word to Meade: "Your note giving movements of enemy and your dispositions received. Burnside's advance is now crossing the river. I will have General Ricketts's division relieved and advanced at once, and urge Burnside's crossing. As soon as I can see Burnside, I will go forward. *If any opportunity presents itself for pitching into a part of Lee's army, do so, without giving time for dispositions.*"† At 8.41, however, he determined not to wait in person for Burnside, but sent him a message instead: "Close up as rapidly as pos-

\* "The enemy are on the Orange pike, about two miles in front of Wilderness tavern, in some force. Until the matter develops, the Major-General Commanding desires you to halt at Todd's tavern."—*Humphreys to Hancock, May 5, 7.30 A.M.*

† This despatch of itself refutes the assertion that Grant was found unprepared and not expecting battle in the Wilderness.

sible with the Sixth corps."\* He then rode at once to the Wilderness tavern, about five miles further on.

A little to the west of the Germanna road, and north of its intersection with the Orange turnpike, is a gently rising mound, covered somewhat less densely than all the rest of the region with a second growth of forest trees. This knoll is part of a ridge which affords the only opportunity for overlooking the country to be found for miles, but from its crest, westward, a wild and rugged area can be seen, with hardly a wood-road passing through; here and there is a ravine or a brook, and one or two houses are visible, with a bit of open land around them; all the rest is one tangled mass of stunted evergreen, dwarf chestnut, oak, and hazel, with an undergrowth of low-limbed bristling shrubs, making the forest almost impenetrable. The deserted Wilderness tavern stood in a hollow near by, completely hidden by the trees. This point was about half-way between the Germanna ford and Todd's tavern, and immediately in rear of Warren's corps. Here Grant fixed his head-quarters, remaining at this spot for the next two days, except on one or two occasions, when he rode to the front, to inspect in person the situation of affairs.

It was an hour after his arrival before Warren's dispositions were completed, and an anxious hour, big with the destiny of armies. The enemy had been discovered on the Orange plank, as well as on the turnpike road, and at nine o'clock, Hancock was ordered up to the support of Getty. Information was also sent to Sedgwick and Burnside and Sheridan. But,

\* "Place one division of your corps on the ridge south of the river, and west or south-west of the plank road. Leave it there until your entire command is over; then close up as rapidly as possible with the Sixth corps, following the Fredericksburg plank road."

although it was evident that a great battle was at hand, neither hostile nor friendly troops could be distinguished in the dark masses of foliage that reached to the foot of the knoll, and only occasional splutterings of musketry betrayed the neighborhood of an enemy. At last, the heavy boom of artillery was heard in front, then the sharp rattle of continuous infantry fire, and by noon Warren was engaged.

He attacked vigorously, with Griffin and Wadsworth's divisions. The enemy in his front was Ewell, and the first national onset was entirely successful; the rebels were driven back in great confusion, Griffin following for nearly a mile. But the density of the thicket prevented the alignment of the troops; the different brigades and divisions could not find each other in the forest, and unity of action became impossible. The same cause, and the absence of roads, prevented Sedgwick's force from connecting with Griffin, on Warren's right, or from arriving at all to co-operate in the attack. This left Griffin's right flank exposed, which the rebels quickly perceived; and when reinforcements arrived, they rallied and moved against the weak point. Griffin, in his turn, was now compelled to retire, in order to avoid a complete out-flanking of his right, and in the movement he lost two guns and a number of prisoners. Wadsworth also was driven back after his first advance. Crawford's division, which in the morning had nearly reached Parker's store, had been withdrawn to the turnpike road, and formed on the left of Wadsworth, one brigade advancing with Wadsworth. When Wadsworth fell back, Crawford was for a time isolated, but he also was drawn in, though not until he had lost many prisoners. The rebels,



however, made no attempt to follow up their advantages, but set about erecting field-works to secure the ground they had held at the beginning of the fight. Lee had doubtless been attacked before he was prepared, and even yet his troops were not sufficiently in hand to enable him to assume an offensive attitude.

This assault had been skilfully and gallantly made. Troops enough to ensure complete success had been ordered to combine—all of the Fifth corps and two divisions of Sedgwick's; while, as has been seen, the promptness of the attack took the rebels by surprise; but the labyrinth in which the movements were made rendered effectual co-operation impossible, even among the troops nearest each other, and Sedgwick's divisions were unable to attack at all. Only these circumstances prevented the overthrow of Lee's entire left, for the rout at first was absolute. But the rebels were resisting on ground with which they were familiar, and communication and co-operation were for them far less difficult than for the bewildered soldiers of Warren, who often could not tell in which direction either to march or fire.

The news of the repulse was brought in rapidly to Grant, and counter-preparations were made. It was now apparent that Lee's whole army was in front, or coming up to attack the national forces before they could get properly into position, while Sedgwick was still on his way from the river, and Hancock had not arrived from Todd's tavern. In every battle that Grant fought there seemed to come a time when no report of staff officers or subordinate commanders entirely satisfied him, but he must see for himself the condition of affairs. He then rode promptly to the important point, fre-

quently forbidding more than a single officer of his staff to follow, and appearing not so much to brave or even despise danger, as utterly to ignore it. There was no splendid daring or enthusiasm in his manner ; he behaved exactly as at ordinary times, made no comment on the exposure, but observed all that he went to observe, determined what he meant to determine, gave his orders clearly and succinctly, and returned to head-quarters as composed and apparently as indifferent as when he set out. He now rode to the front, to obtain a view of the situation, or at least an idea of the nature of the ground. Warren led the way, conspicuous on a white horse, and with the yellow sash and paraphernalia of a general, which he usually wore in battle. Grant was more simply clad, but wore his sword, an unusual circumstance with him ; he seemed, however, to consider the occasion one of peculiar dignity : it was his first battle after assuming command of all the armies.

A narrow country road led out to Warren's front, and the troops were thronging without definite alignment in the woods on either side. The national and rebel works, thrown up in the intervals of the fight, were close to each other, but only half visible through the smoke of the battle still lingering, and the overhanging branches of the Wilderness. Grant made himself acquainted with the extraordinary character of the region, and saw the importance of maintaining Warren's position, but he could distinguish little or nothing of the enemy. On his return to Old Wilderness tavern, officers were dispatched to hasten Sedgwick, and Burnside was directed to make all speed from the ford ; for Grant's desire now was to bring to bear as

large a force as possible against Lee's left, so as to distract attention from the gap between Warren and Hancock. But Lee had detected his opportunity, and Hill was already moving in the direction of the Brock road, along the Orange plank. Getty, however, was instructed to hold his position at the junction, against all odds, until the Second corps arrived, and renewed orders were sent to Hancock to come to the relief of the threatened division. Hancock at once rode on in advance of his troops, but the head of his column was still miles away at noon, and great anxiety was felt lest Lee should be able to mass against Getty before the supports arrived. Wilson, too, was far in advance, and had been isolated by Hill's approach, and nothing was known of his fate.

Getty had reached the cross-roads early in the day, but almost immediately afterwards, Hill's advance came up, driving the cavalry outposts, and a sharp fight ensued; Getty, however, was able to secure the important position, and held it while the bulk of Hill's command was forming on the Orange plank road. It was two o'clock when the head of Hancock's column came in sight on the left, none too soon, for Hill was now close in front and in force. Hancock at once connected with the left of Getty, extending his own left so as to cover the junction of the Brock road with that leading to the Catharpen furnace. The density of the forest permitted only a single opening where artillery could have an effective range; this was on the extreme left, and here Hancock posted all the batteries of his command, while breastworks of earth and logs were thrown up along his entire front.

At 2.15, and again at 2.30 P.M., he received orders to combine with Getty in attacking Hill, and



then to unite with Warren's left ; his troops, however, were not yet all in line, but forming as they arrived on the ground ; and the roads were so narrow and so heavily wooded on both sides, that the formation was slow. Between three and four o'clock a third order came for him to attack with his whole corps, supporting Getty. Finally, at 4.15, Getty received direct orders from Meade to attack without waiting for Hancock, and immediately advanced. His troops encountered the enemy within two hundred paces of the Brock road, and were at once hotly engaged. Hancock, perceiving this, ordered Birney and Mott's divisions to support Getty, although their formation was still incomplete, and the fight now became fierce ; the lines of battle were exceedingly close, and the musketry fire was continuous and deadly all along the front. The remaining troops of the Second corps were soon ordered up, and desperate and repeated assaults were made. Hancock, however, fought altogether outside of his breastworks, and the rebels, having the cover of the forest, were able to resist him, and to inflict great damage. Hays, one of Hancock's most gallant brigadiers, was killed at the head of his troops, attempting to repair a break in his line, and Getty was severely wounded, but refused to leave the field.\*

Meanwhile, the roar of musketry had announced to Grant that the long waited for encounter had begun. The sound was like one incessant peal of thunder, and most remarkable to those familiar with

\* My account of the operations of Hancock's command on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of May, is based upon General Hancock's admirable report, the entire accuracy of which I have found no reason to question.

battle, because so seldom interrupted by artillery; for neither cavalry nor artillery could be used where infantry was hardly able to force a way. For hours there was no intermission of this terrible and unusual sound. As reports were brought in of the uncertain issue of the fight, Grant determined to send a force from the left of Warren, to relieve the troops so hotly engaged. Wadsworth's division and one brigade of Robinson's were accordingly ordered to make their way through the woods southwards, towards the sound of battle. But neither men nor officers could see fifty yards before them. Manœuvring was impossible; skirmishing was the only tactics, and Wadsworth was compelled to direct the march of his troops by the compass. These obstacles prevented his movement from making any impression; it was dark when he arrived at the rebel skirmish line, and his men lay on their arms where night found them, at right angles to the front of Hill. At about the same time, Hancock's strange encounter with half-seen enemies coming in and out of the smoke and the forest was interrupted by the more absolute darkness of night. Meanwhile, Sedgwick had taken position on the right of Warren, and both the Fifth and the Sixth corps had been engaged, but no important results occurred.

During the day, Sheridan had ordered Gregg's division to Todd's tavern, to meet Wilson, who, it was supposed, would return by a circuitous route to the left of the army. Gregg was just in time. The rebel cavalry had left Hamilton's crossing to rejoin Lee, and Wilson encountered a large force, but fought his way through, and was pushing on to the tavern, followed hard by the enemy; but when Gregg arrived the struggle was renewed, and the

rebels were driven off. Sheridan now concentrated his corps so as to confront the rebel cavalry. He covered the trains and held all the country on Hancock's left, from Todd's tavern to Piney Branch church, on the roads to Spottsylvania.

Thus the day ended without decisive results. Grant, however, had succeeded in drawing Lee outside of his entrenchments at Mine run, and had foiled him in two distinct tactical endeavors. Lee had attempted to strike Grant before the latter was prepared; but Grant himself had seized the initiative, and suddenly turning his columns westward, had checked Ewell peremptorily and permanently on the turnpike road.\* Lee's next effort was to gain

\* Several writers hostile to the national cause, have endeavored to show that Grant was surprised in the Wilderness; that he was "caught in *flagrante delicto*;" that he was ignorant of Lee's whereabouts; that he set out to go to Gordonsville, and was foiled in the attempt: but two or three facts dispose of all this nonsense, and prove how foolish it is for people to write of matters about which they are ignorant. The rebel signals read on the morning of the 5th (see page 99), gave Grant early information of Lee's movements; and his despatch to Halleck of the same day: "Forty-eight hours now will demonstrate whether the enemy intends giving battle this side of Richmond," as well as the order to Burnside to "make a forced march," proves that a contest in the Wilderness was anticipated. Wilson's orders for the 5th directed him to keep parties out on the Orange turnpike road, and that officer's report shows that he obeyed his orders. As early as 7.30 A.M., Meade informed Grant of the appearance of the enemy; at 8.24, Grant directed Meade to "pitch in, without giving time for dispositions;" and before nine o'clock, the orders were issued for Hancock to come to the support of Getty. Lee's report to Jefferson Davis says: "A strong attack was made on Ewell;" and Early, in Ewell's corps, whose troops were those which first met Warren on the turnpike road, declares: "The enemy in heavy force was encountered." The rebels evidently did not consider that Grant was surprised.



the cross-roads and prevent the junction of Hancock with the bulk of the national army ; an excellent conception ; but here also Grant was too quick for him. Getty, with a single division, first reached the critical point, and held it afterwards for hours in the presence of double his own force, although Lee in person was in front ; and when Hancock arrived, it was the national troops and not the rebels who made the first assault. So far, Lee was out-generalled.

But the intricacy of the thicket had prevented Grant's further success. The men on both sides fought splendidly, whether they attacked or repelled ; but a wrestle as blind as at midnight, a gloom that made manœuvres impracticable, a jungle where regiments stumbled on each other and on the enemy by turns, firing sometimes into their own ranks, and guided often only by the crackling of the bushes or the cheers and cries that rose from the depths around—these, added to the ignorance of the country under which the national soldiers labored, made it impossible to carry out completely the combinations of their commander. Still they had frustrated those of Lee, and a position was gained from which attack could be made on the 6th, without other disadvantage than that same terrible one, of the nature of the ground. With this ground, however, the enemy was perfectly familiar, having held it in constant military occupation for nearly two years, and moved over it in actual campaigning three separate times.

Grant, meanwhile, was calm and confident, and all the feeling at his head-quarters, taking tone from him, was as hopeful as it had been in the morning ; only saddened by the thought of the brave men who had been equally hopeful in the morning, and now

lay unburied or uncared for, in the defiles of the Wilderness.\* Grant's tent was pitched in a hollow behind the mound where he had passed most of the day, and thither Meade came to receive his orders for the morrow. Both generals were well aware that the battle had only begun; a corps in each army had yet not been engaged, and all night Longstreet was marching to the support of Hill, and Burnside to take place in the national line; for, in this strange contest, whether they marched or fought, darkness enveloped the movements of either army. The advance of Longstreet on the Orange plank road had been discovered, and it was now evident that Lee's hope and effort would be to crush the national left, and force the army up against the Rapidan; a bold plan, but one in which he had in other campaigns succeeded, when other generals had been opposed to him. Grant, however, perceived the design, and determined to mass the bulk of his force on the threatened point, and to meet the rebel attack with a counter one. Accordingly, Getty's division was ordered to remain with the Second corps, and while Hancock made a front attack with his entire command thus reinforced, Wadsworth, who, it will be remembered, had advanced through the woods, so that he was nearly at right angles with the rebel line, was to assault Hill's left. At the same time, Burnside was to move to the interval between

\* "Repeated efforts were made, especially at night, to bring off the wounded lying between the lines, but with very small success, it being almost impossible to find wounded men scattered through the dense thickets, and the enemy firing at every moving light or even at the slightest noise."—*Report of Colonel McParlin, Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac.*

Wadsworth's right and the left of Warren, and attempt to pierce the rebel centre, which, it was hoped, would be weakened by the necessity of supporting Hill. If Burnside succeeded in penetrating, he was at once to turn to his own left, and complete the destruction of Lee's right wing. Warren and Sedgwick were to attack simultaneously on the other portions of the line, but as they would each have been weakened by the subtraction of a division, their assault was intended only to engage the enemy in their own front, and to prevent reinforcements being sent to Hill; there was no idea of producing an important tactical result in this part of the field. The plan of the battle was the combined attack of Hancock and Wadsworth in front and flank, and the piercing of the rebel centre, which should enable Burnside also to strike Lee's right and assist in crushing Hill.\*

The original orders were to attack at half-past four. Grant, as usual, was anxious to assume the initiative; but, after the directions were issued, Meade thought he could not be ready in time, and applied for a delay of an hour and a-half.† Grant was un-

\* It is amusing to observe the complacency with which writers who did not know and could not understand Grant's plans have therefore assumed that he had none. It has been asserted that in the operations of the 6th of May there were neither combinations nor grand tactics—that the order of battle was simple, and to all the corps—attack along the whole line. Now, Hancock's report states that his front attack was to be supported by the flank ones of Wadsworth and Burnside, and all the rebel accounts speak of a national attack in front and flank of Hill. Burnside's report also shows that he understood the "grand tactics" in which he was ordered to bear a part. Hancock had fully half the army under his command, and this most military men would consider a "combination."

† It should be borne in mind that all Grant's orders to corps commanders, except in the case of Burnside, were issued through Meade.



willing to postpone the battle so long, but allowed a change in the hour from half-past four to five.\* It was not yet dawn when the head of Burnside's column came up on the Germanna road, having started from the ford an hour after midnight. Ferrero's colored division was at once detached and ordered to guard the trains, and Burnside saw it no more until July;† while the remainder of the Ninth corps was directed to move as rapidly as possible to the left of Warren, and join in the general attack. At the same time, Longstreet was advancing on Lee's right, to support the battalions of Hill, which had been engaged the day before. But this movement was delayed, and in order to distract the attention of Grant, Lee ordered the troops on his own left to attack the national right. In this way, the rebel assault was made a few moments earlier than Grant's. Wright, however, was in front of Ewell, and quite ready to reply; and the battle swept along Sedgwick's entire front to that of Warren.

Hancock had made all his dispositions for a direct attack at five; but, before that hour, he was informed that Longstreet was moving along the Catharpen road, against his left. He at once pre-

\* "I am directed by the General commanding to say that you may change the hour of attack to five o'clock, as he is afraid if delayed until six, the enemy might take the initiative, which he desires especially to avoid."—*Lieutenant-Colonel Rowley, of Grant's staff to General Meade, May 5.*

† It is this division which I have subtracted from Burnside's force in estimating the number of men Grant could put into battle on the 4th of May. Colored troops had at that time never been incorporated with the army of the Potomac, and it was thought better to employ them for a while in guarding trains or in the defence of forts.

pared to resist the enemy at the threatened point, placing Barlow's division, with all the artillery of the Second corps, so as to cover the approaches to the Brock road. This prevented the massing of his entire force which had been intended; but, notwithstanding this distraction, precisely at five A.M., the two divisions composing Hancock's right (those of Mott and Birney), together with Getty's command, advanced along the Orange plank road, and attacked the enemy with great vehemence. Wadsworth assaulted simultaneously on the right of the plank road. The contest was desperate for more than an hour, but finally the enemy's line was broken at all points, and the rebels were driven through the woods in great confusion. Their killed and wounded strewn the ground; prisoners and flags were captured; Lee's head-quarters and the rebel trains and artillery were in full sight, and the battle was almost won. At this juncture, a division of Longstreet was brought up, and Hancock ordered a halt. His troops were disordered by the rapidity of the pursuit as well as by the obstacles of the forest, and their commander determined to adjust his formations before advancing further. At the same time, Gibbon, who commanded the entire left of the Second corps, was informed of the success on the right, and ordered to assault, pressing forward to join the other portion of the line, now so far in advance. But Longstreet was again supposed to be approaching on the left flank, and this order was only partially obeyed. Hancock's two wings were connected, but no other advantage was gained.

The anxiety in regard to Longstreet was not without foundation. Some part of his force did, early in

the day, move up towards the Brock road, doubtless intending to turn the national left; but Hancock's success in front probably compelled Lee to change his plans, and bring in Longstreet more exactly to the support of Hill.\* During the morning, also, Lee had sent Stuart's cavalry out towards the left and rear of the national army; but this became known to Grant, and Stuart was met by Sheridan at Todd's tavern, where a stubborn fight ensued, in which Sheridan was completely victorious and Stuart driven off. The sound of this battle was borne to the ears of Hancock, who supposed it to be from Longstreet's advance, and was, therefore, still more anxious to maintain a force on the Brock road sufficient to guard his exposed left. But Longstreet was now in front, and the left was in reality secure.

From four to six in the morning, Burnside's command had been passing Grant's tent, on its way to the front. At 6.50, word came that Longstreet had arrived, and orders were instantly given to Burnside to send Stevenson's division to report to Hancock; the other two divisions, under Burnside himself, moved on by the Parker's store road, and after crossing the Wilderness run, were to press forward and seize the store. Burnside's advance, however, was obstructed, as Warren's had been the day before, by the intricate nature of the woods, which not only rendered it impossible to ascertain the position of the enemy, but for even regimental officers to observe the movements of their own commands. Delay was, therefore, unavoidable, but most unfortunate, for Hancock waited that the attacks might be simultaneous. Officer after officer was sent to Burnside, to hasten

\* Hancock's report is my authority for this statement.



his movements, as the day wore on ; but he was still groping his way. It was impossible for commanders to exercise the necessary control of their troops ; the lines became broken and confused ; the men fired at whatever was in front of them, and the wounded going to the rear, were sometimes taken prisoner by rebel regiments, which themselves had lost their way.

In the meantime, Sedgwick had repulsed the enemy in his front, and advanced his line several hundred yards. Warren also had been engaged, and at one point on his left, a brigade had given way, and was driven back till the rush of fugitives through the woods could be seen from Grant's head-quarters ; but the attack proved unimportant, and dispositions were speedily made to repair the temporary break. Still, there was an important gap between Warren and Hancock, which Burnside had not yet filled.

The most anxious moments of the day were those which followed Hancock's halt. Longstreet was known to be advancing ; Stuart was also on the left, engaged with Sheridan ; the fate of the battle was balancing ; the whole chance of demolishing the enemy's right was delayed, and might be lost, before Burnside could assault. If the Ninth and Second corps could meet at Parker's store, all might be accomplished, and while the critical moments were passing in which this was possible, the anxiety was greater than when the troops were actually engaged. Grant and Meade rode out once or twice to the front, but spent most of the day at their post on the hill, waiting for further intelligence. They sat on the ground, and discussed the chances, and studied their maps, and read the despatches when aides-de-camp came breathless in from the

front, and listened constantly for the outburst of musketry which should tell that the battle was renewed. Grant, however, expressed no impatience, and manifested no excitement; but if need came for an instant decision, it was made and uttered instantly, and unflinchingly, though it involved the fate of a corps. At these supreme moments, the dullest perceived his intensity, the most unwilling admitted his power.

At times the battle seemed to approach headquarters; dispositions were made to hold the ridge; artillery was put into position; an occasional cannon ball fell among the bushes on the crest; stragglers came in from the front, and the outlines of troops could sometimes be discerned for a moment through the glades. At last the terrific roar of musketry on the left proclaimed that Hancock was again engaged.

Three divisions from other portions of the army had now been added to Hancock's own command. Wadsworth was on the right of Birney, then Stevenson, of the Ninth corps, while Getty was in the rear; Hancock had also been informed that Burnside would attack on the right, across his front. This time, however, it was the rebels who made the assault. Hancock's right was advancing along the Orange plank road, when, as had been anticipated, his left front, though not his left flank, was seriously threatened. At the same moment his right became engaged. The firing of Sheridan's battle continued, its true cause still unknown; and, at this juncture, a body of infantry was reported approaching along the Brock road, from the direction of Todd's tavern. Certain that he had no troops in that quarter, Hancock naturally supposed this to be the turning movement of Longstreet so con-

stantly apprehended, and made dispositions to resist it; breastworks were erected across the road, and several brigades were sent out to hold them. The infantry, however, proved to be a body of convalescent troops, marching from Chancellorsville to rejoin the army, and following the route of the Second corps. They delayed and threatened Hancock almost as much as if they had been a force of the enemy.

Longstreet's attack was made against the left front, and with great vehemence. Hancock's advanced brigade was at once swept away, and Mott's entire division forced back in confusion. Hancock, however, promptly endeavored to restore order, and to re-form his line along the Orange plank road, by throwing back his left and pivoting his right on the advanced position acquired in the morning; but again the density of the forest prevented any delicate manœuvring; the formations were lost, and Hancock was at last obliged to withdraw his troops from the woods, and to fall back within the breastworks along the Brock road—his original line of battle in the morning. He thus lost all that he had gained. Wadsworth also was driven back, and while striving to rally his men, he was shot in the head, in the thickest of the battle, and his body fell into the hands of the enemy. Hancock, however, was able to adjust his lines when under cover, and soon re-established order, and although the rebels followed to within a few hundred paces of the breastworks, they attempted no assault. Longstreet had been seriously wounded during the battle, and carried from the field, and Lee had taken command of the rebel right in person; but even his influence was insufficient to bring the men against the works, and



he was reluctantly compelled to withdraw, in order to re-form and prepare for another assault.

A remarkable movement was now executed by Leasure's brigade of the Ninth corps, which was temporarily under Hancock's orders, and in position at the left of his line. Leasure was directed to advance towards the right, sweeping along Hancock's front in the direction of the plank road, and towards Hill's left, and keeping his own right about one hundred paces from the national breastworks. These instructions were carried out with great spirit and success. The brigade was deployed at right angles to Hancock's line of battle, and traversed the entire front of two divisions, crossing the Orange plank road in its march, and encountering a brigade of the enemy, which fell back in disorder, without offering battle. The space in front of Hancock was thus entirely cleared.

And now came another long and weary delay. There was still no help from Burnside, and though the rebel assault had been checked, the difficulties of fighting in the Wilderness were such that it was thought unadvisable to advance again except in mass, and simultaneously. It seemed as if the day would never end. The attack at dawn, the early success of Hancock, the fight of Sheridan, the advance of Longstreet, the delay of Burnside, the rebel assault on Hancock, the temporary yielding of Warren's left—all these events crowded the hours and made them seem interminable. Men looked at their watches, thinking it must be almost night, and found it nine o'clock in the morning. At last a staff officer came in from the front and reported that Burnside was about to attack, and that the impassable character of the country fully accounted for his delay.

The Ninth corps in the morning had guarded the interval between Sedgwick and the river, but when Burnside was moved up towards the front, the right of the Sixth corps became exposed, and at last was left in the air. Sedgwick was therefore ordered to entrench his right, and at the same time all the bridges but one were taken up, so that no connection was left with Washington except at Germanna ford. Disaster now would be irreparable. If Longstreet should succeed in reaching Hancock's rear, and cutting the road to Fredericksburg, Grant's only line of retreat was gone. But this was the moment at which he ordered the bridges to be removed.

As he lay under the trees, waiting for Burnside's advance, and revolving the news of Hancock's disaster, the idea of a movement still further to the left, thrusting his whole force between Lee and Richmond, was presented to his mind. The struggle in the Wilderness promised no tactical result; the thicket formed for Lee a natural abatis, where the national superiority in numbers was an impediment rather than an advantage; and if the rebels fell back within their works, as now seemed probable, they could repel assault, inflicting a greater injury than any they would receive. But, by moving towards the left, Grant would again compel Lee to come from under cover, and, as he hoped, to fight with fewer advantages. He mentioned the possibility of this manœuvre to one or two officers \* on Friday afternoon, the 6th of May, but determined to await the result of the combined assault by the Ninth and Second corps. Thus, at the darkest moment of the fight, a further advance of the whole

\* General Rawlins and Colonels Porter and Babcock, of his staff.

army was the movement that events suggested to Grant. His resources were all offensive ones.

At 4.15 p.m., the rebels again advanced upon Hancock's line in force, again under the immediate command of Lee. They pressed forward to the edge of the abatis, within a hundred paces of the breastworks, where they halted and delivered a furious fire of musketry. This continued for nearly half an hour, the national line unwavering. All day the battle had swayed to and fro over a strip of ground varying from two hundred yards to a mile in width, where the severely wounded of both sides lay scattered. During the battle, the woods took fire in several places, blazing for hours, and hundreds of the wounded, unable to escape, were either suffocated or burned alive. Finally, the flames were communicated from the forest in front to the breastworks, and these being constructed entirely of wood, became one mass of fire, which it was impossible in the height of battle to subdue. The fight, however, went on in the midst of the conflagration, the flames literally licking the legs of the combatants. The intense heat, and the smoke which was driven by the wind directly in the faces of Hancock's men, prevented them on portions of the line from firing over the parapet; and at last compelled them at some points to entirely abandon the works. A part of Mott and Birney's divisions thus gave way in great disorder, retiring in the direction of Chancellorsville. As soon as the break occurred, the rebels pushed in, and planted their battle-flags on the breastworks; but Carroll's brigade of Birney's division was instantly advanced at the double quick pace, and forced them back in great confusion. They



left their dead and wounded inside of Hancock's line.

Lee, in his turn, was now greatly endangered, and during the engagement he rode in person to the front and endeavored to restore his shattered line ; but his officers besought him to retire. He yielded to their entreaties, and soon afterwards the rebel assault was definitely repelled. No further attempt was made to renew the battle. Lee drew completely off, and Grant countermanded the order previously given for another attack by Hancock.

Burnside, meanwhile, had several times advanced upon the enemy in his front, but his movements were isolated and unsupported, and no important results occurred. Warren and Sedgwick had also fought hard at intervals during the afternoon : their operations, however, served only to prevent the enemy from concentrating his entire force against the national left. No ground had been gained by either since early morning, and none lost.

Just before sunset, a movement was made by the troops of Early's command against Sedgwick's corps, the right of which was turned, and several hundred prisoners were captured,\* among them two brigadier-generals, Seymour and Shaler. The enemy, however, became entangled in the brushwood, and was thrown into nearly as great confusion as the national line. Darkness came on, and it was impossible to discover how much injury had been received or inflicted by either side. Sedgwick therefore drew in his right, and re-formed his line in

\* The losses in this affair have been greatly over-estimated by several national writers. Early, whose troops were those which made the attack, says "several hundred prisoners" were taken.

rear of the position he had previously occupied, and the rebels at the same time retreated, taking off their prisoners, but thankful that the national troops were ignorant of their disorder.\* Exaggerated reports of this affair were brought to Grant's headquarters after dark ; some of them came in even after he had gone to his camp bed, and officers hurried to his tent with terrible news ; he was wakened to hear that the right of the whole army was turned, that Sedgwick was driven in, and the headquarters themselves were in danger of capture. Grant could not know at first whether these rumors were true or false ; but he made his dispositions quietly, ordered troops to be sent to Sedgwick's support, a second line to be formed inside of that which had been broken, and when his orders were given, went back to his pillow and slept till morning. His officers discussed the situation for hours, and sat up to learn the fate of Sedgwick, wondering at their chief, who could sleep amid such dangers, and when the crisis of his own fate and that of the army might be at hand. But he had done all that he could to avert misfortune ; he must now await results, and the man upon whom all these responsibilities rested slept calmly, after the indecisive battle of the Wilderness.

On the morning of the 7th, the troops were held in readiness to resist any further attack, but no assault was made by either army ; and the silence was strange and oppressive, after the terrible and continuous roar of the last two days. Grant's pickets

\* "It was fortunate, however, that darkness came to close this affair, as the enemy, if he had been able to discover the disorder on our side, might have brought up fresh troops and availed himself of our condition."—*Early's Memoir*.

were advanced a mile and a half, and skirmishing parties were sent out on all the fronts, but from Sedgwick's right to Hancock's left, no movement of the enemy could be discovered. The army of Northern Virginia had withdrawn behind its works. Grant, however, was ready to continue the fight, if the rebels would come from under cover, and about mid-day Warren was sent forward to reconnoitre in force. Some sharp firing now occurred, but it had no significance. Lee had definitely abandoned his offensive movement. The battle of the Wilderness was over.

The hosts still confronted each other on nearly the same ground they had occupied twenty-four hours before. The national army had not forced its way through Lee's lines, nor had the rebels pushed Grant back against the Rapidan. Lee had not only gained no ground, but had been compelled to return behind his works after battle, while Grant acknowledged that the fighting was the hardest he had ever known ; for even Shiloh was not comparable with the Wilderness. But the way to Richmond was still unblocked, and by moving to the left, Grant could again compel the army of Northern Virginia to follow his lead. The rebels had utterly failed to turn the national left, or to seize the roads by which Grant covered his own rear and threatened the right of the Southern army. For it must be remembered that in this battle Lee deliberately attempted to assume the offensive. He came out boldly, and with the instincts of a great commander, to attack his antagonist, as soon as he discovered that Grant had crossed the Rapidan ; hoping doubtless to strike the army of the Potomac, before its columns could be brought into position for battle. But although he



had the start, and ought certainly to have forced his plans upon Grant, he found the initiative snatched from his grasp. Ewell was stopped at once and definitely held by Warren and Sedgwick, so that he came no further ; and instead of attacking Grant before his troops were well in hand, Lee himself received the first assault, and was so unready that even when, aided by the friendly woods, his troops were able to resist the advance of Warren, he still could not take advantage of the success which they had obtained.

But soon perceiving Grant's peculiar danger and his own opportunity, Lee turned his heaviest columns against the national left ; again, however, to find that an equally acute perception and a still more vigorous genius had seized, as well as discerned, the point on which the fate of the battle depended. Had Lee been able to secure the cross-roads and prevent the junction of Hancock with Grant's centre, the historian might have had a different tale to tell. But though with every advantage on his side, though knowing the country intimately, and therefore aware in advance of the immense importance of the junction ; though informed early on the 4th, of Grant's passage of the Rapidan, and certain that the national army must press on by these very roads ; although he started himself on the same day as Grant, and was twenty miles nearer the key-point, Lee was unable to reach the junction before his rival, who had a river to cross and no knowledge of the country to aid his plans. Even after coming up in person to the critical spot with two divisions of Hill, while Getty alone was in front, Lee allowed hours to pass without attacking, until finally, here

also, instead of delivering, he received assault. The same error was thus committed of which he had been guilty earlier in the day. In each instance, having long studied the ground, and doubtless foreseen the very possibilities which afterwards occurred, Lee planned with ability, but his genius failed him in accomplishment.

So also on the morning of the 6th, he was seriously at fault. Hancock's brilliant success was in great part owing to the fact that Longstreet had not been brought upon the field in time to resist the early assault. Yet Lee had known that Grant was massing upon Hill; he had discovered the day before how large a force was already with the national left, and, nevertheless, he allowed Longstreet to halt for half a day on the road from Gordonsville.\* This nearly proved his ruin; for if Hancock had followed up his victory, the rout of Hill would have been that of the rebel army. The same feebleness in offensive action was twice apparent later in the day. When Longstreet fell, and Lee in person took command of the rebel right, instead of pushing on with his victorious columns, and utterly destroying the disordered force of Hancock, he drew off his troops at the critical moment, to re-form, and allowed an opportunity to escape which never again occurred; while, in the subsequent assault led by himself in the afternoon, although his men had even crowned the parapet with their standards—when a single national brigade came up to the rescue, Lee was disastrously repelled. He gave, indeed, no indication of great offensive qualities in any event of this battle. He was bold in

\* The statement of Longstreet's halt is made by McCabe, and other rebel writers.

conception, even in attempt ; but in execution he was weak. When thrown upon the defensive, however, his peculiar qualities as a general shone. Then, aided by the Wilderness and the gallantry of his soldiers, he held Grant off with splendid determination. But he needed to be attacked to show wherein his greatness lay. He was not a commander who created opportunities.

Grant, on the contrary, though threatened twice on the 5th of May, in each instance turned the tables on his antagonist. The rapidity with which he changed front when Warren discovered the enemy ; the promptness and vigor with which he assaulted ; the quickness of his decisions in the field, and the equal quickness with which he acted on them ; the glance at which he discovered that the left must be his important point, and the energy with which he massed his troops on the threatened quarter, stripping other parts of the line to strengthen this, and, if not crushing the rebels, still holding the point and keeping open the route by which he was enabled to take at any time the strategic initiative, and again to threaten Lee's communications, while his own remained intact ; above all, the peremptory conversion of Lee's clever offensive into a purely defensive attitude—these were in marked contrast with the tactics of his rival. It was the forest, and not the enemy, that had thwarted Grant.

But he was thwarted only. Many generals in his situation would have retreated at once. Weak men would have been alarmed for the communications of their army ; others would have been appalled at the magnitude of their losses, or confused by the obstructions to their plans. But from the moment



when Grant became convinced that to force his way through the Wilderness would entail a greater loss than he would probably be able to inflict upon the enemy, he had but one intention—to advance by his left flank, and compel the corresponding movement of Lee. To retreat did not suggest itself to his mind. His only thought was to renew the fight where he could secure for himself the advantage of the ground. It was this quality, not only of persistency—for this he shared with his great opponent—but of persistent aggressiveness, of always attacking, of seizing the initiative, and forcing the action of the enemy, which was the basis of all his success, and the especial characteristic of Grant. In no instance was it more fully displayed than when he determined to move onward after the battle of the Wilderness. Having so determined, he was calm, and could sleep quietly, although Sedgwick had been thrust back half a mile.

This battle was the first of that long series of blows which Grant intended should shatter the rebellion, and every one of which he meant should tell. He often explained to those in his confidence that he did not expect by a single effort to overthrow the fabric; it was too firmly established; its leaders were too able and too desperate, its soldiers too experienced and gallant for this; but persistent and repeated attacks in every quarter, he doubted not, would finally complete the ruin of the so-called Confederacy. The practical result of the contest in the Wilderness was therefore far from a disappointment to the chief, or to those who knew his plans. He would indeed have desired a more complete success, and did not assume to call this

victory; but he recognized the desperate strength which he had fitted himself to cope with, and was not surprised. He felt that one step was taken towards the end. Lee was not destroyed, it was true, but his army was weakened materially and morally; and whether his spirit was cowed and acknowledged its master, or whether Grant's skill was so absolute as to allow no opportunity, the rebel general never again assumed a completely offensive attitude.

The losses of the national army on the 5th, 6th, and 7th of May were two thousand two hundred and sixty-one killed, eight thousand seven hundred and eighty-five wounded, and two thousand nine hundred and two missing.\* Probably twenty-five hundred of the missing were prisoners, and at least half of the wounded returned to the ranks without leaving the army. The losses of Lee no human being can tell. No official report of them exists, if any was ever made, and no statement that has been put forth in regard to them has any foundation but a guess. It seems, however, fair to presume that as Lee fought outside of his works as often as Grant, and was as often repelled, the slaughter of the rebels equalled that in the national army. The grey coats lay as thick as the blue next day, when the national scouts pushed out over the entire battle-field and could discover no living enemy.†

\* See note to Chapter XIX.

† Early states, in his Memoir, that when he took command of Hill's corps on the 8th of May, it numbered 13,000 muskets. On the 20th of April, Hill returned 20,648 muskets for duty. According to Early, therefore, the loss in this corps, at the battle of the Wilderness, was 7,600, or more than one-third its numbers. At this rate, Lee's entire loss would have been 25,000.

Grant was apprehensive lest the rebels should have entirely disappeared, contemplating an attack in some other quarter, or perhaps had divined his plans, and were preparing to forestall the national movement to the left. His own designs could not be carried out if there was danger of any serious interruption; and as the battle had been a drawn one, and neither party had possession of the field, neither party could know how much the other had really suffered. The anxiety in regard to the enemy's movements was greater in consequence.

At three o'clock on the afternoon of the 7th, a messenger arrived from Washington, with despatches announcing that Butler had moved according to orders, and landed his whole force at City Point on the 5th, completely surprising the enemy. Sherman also was advancing upon Johnston, and expected to give battle on the 7th. Upon the receipt of the intelligence from Butler, orders were at once issued for a night march of the whole army by the left flank towards Spottsylvania; for Grant thought it possible that Lee might have been summoned to Richmond on account of the threatening aspect of affairs on the south side of the James; and he was most unwilling that the rebel army, having once been brought to bay, should escape without still further injury, or, indeed, that the contest now inaugurated should end until that army was destroyed.

Warren was again to have the advance. He was ordered to withdraw from the lines immediately after dark, and to move by the Brock road, in the rear of Hancock, who would remain in position on the left till the Fifth corps had entirely passed, in order to screen the movement from the enemy. Hancock



was then to follow close upon Warren, while Sedgwick and Burnside would move on the left, by way of Chancellorsville and Piney Branch church. Sheridan was to keep a force well out beyond the exposed flank of the army. The trains would move to the left of both columns. During the afternoon, Sheridan had a serious fight at Todd's tavern, driving the rebel cavalry so as to make way for Warren; and, as soon as the darkness was deep enough to conceal the movement, the Fifth corps came out of its works, and fell into the road to Spottsylvania.

Early in the evening Grant and Meade, accompanied by their staffs, took up the line of march. They soon reached the Brock road, and came upon the field of the terrible fighting of two days before. Hancock's men yet lay along the road, behind the works they had defended so well, and the little cavalcade threaded its way carefully in the darkness, so that the horses might not trample on the sleeping soldiers. The men, however, soon discovered that Grant was passing, and that his face was turned towards Richmond, and although the orders for the march had not been made public, with the quick perceptions of veterans, they at once divined what this midnight ride of the general-in-chief must mean. They were not to retreat across the Rapidan, as had happened so often before. The word was passed from man to man: "Grant is moving to Richmond;" and all along the road they rose spontaneously, and weary, stiff, sore, and wounded as they were, they made the defiles of the Wilderness echo with their cheers. Their chief was almost unseen in the darkness, and to most of them his features

would have been unfamiliar, if they could have been discerned ; but they read his meaning nevertheless, and felt that he was not disheartened. Their first battle under him was over, the most terrible that even the army of the Potomac had ever fought, and when they found that the campaign was to continue, the men were satisfied with the result and with their commander. On account of the near neighborhood of the enemy, orders were repeatedly given not to cheer, but the soldiers would not obey. Their shouts were so loud and so long continued that the rebels thought it a night attack, and came out to the front to reply ; and the rattle of Lee's musketry made part of the salute that Hancock's veterans offered to Grant. Afterwards, in hours of disappointment, anxiety, and doubt, when the country seemed distrustful and success far distant, those nearest the chief were wont to recall this midnight ride in the Wilderness, and the verdict of the army of the Potomac after its first battle under Grant.

The party soon struck off from the main road into a dark and tangled wood-path ; and whether the guide was false, or only ignorant, he professed to have lost his way. It was then discovered that Grant and Meade, with their staffs and escort, hardly a hundred men in all, were moving on a road directly between the two armies, and of course, in imminent danger of capture. Their steps, however, were soon retraced, and in the early morning they arrived at Todd's tavern, where they slept on Sheridan's battle-field, while Warren was marching by towards Spottsylvania court-house.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Grant's object in movement on Spottsylvania—Description of country between Wilderness and Spottsylvania—Mistake of Meade—Greater mistake of Lee—Advance of national cavalry—Arrival of Anderson—Warren's advance—Warren's attack—Warren's repulse—Country around Spottsylvania—Position of both armies—Lee again on the defensive—Sheridan sent to James river—Death of Sedgwick—Wright placed in command of Sixth corps—News from Sherman and Butler—Movement of Second corps against Lee's left—Crossing of Po—Withdrawal of Hancock—Gallant fight of Barlow—Able manœuvring on both sides—Repeated assaults of Warren on Lee's centre—Assault of Upton—Repulse of Warren—Success of Upton—Delay of Mott—Renewed but unsuccessful assault of Fifth corps—Withdrawal of Upton—Further news from Butler—Assault of the 12th of May—Preliminary arrangements—Hancock's advance—Hancock's success—Rebel centre pierced—Large captures of prisoners and guns—Scene at Grant's head-quarters—Advance of Wright—Hancock pushed back—Warren's delay—Opposition to Burnside—Fierce fighting of Wright and Hancock—Rebels unable to re-carry position—Traits of Hancock and Warren—Promotions after the battle—Meade's relations with Grant—Manœuvres around Spottsylvania—Good news from Sherman—Confusion in Richmond—Attack of the 17th of May—Defeat of Sigel and Butler—Movement ordered towards Richmond—Sigel replaced by Hunter—Troops drawn from both Butler and Sigel—Canby ordered to South-West—Ewell's advance on Grant's right—Ewell's repulse—Persistency of Grant.

It has already been seen that Grant's first object in the movement upon Spottsylvania was to force the rebels out of the position to which, after two days' fighting in the Wilderness, they had retired. Those two days had convinced him that Lee was unable to maintain the contest in the open field, and



meant to await any further attack behind his works. Grant, therefore, determined to push his whole force between the enemy and Richmond, for as the rebels could not possibly abandon communication with their capital, they would thus be compelled to come out of their works and attack the national army. The manœuvre was not to gain a position particularly important in itself, but to provoke another encounter on more advantageous terms. But this was not all. Grant was also anxious to co-operate with the expedition on the James. On the 8th of May, he said: "My effort will be to form a junction with Butler as early as possible, and be prepared to meet any enemy interposing. . . My exact route to the James I have not yet distinctly marked out." Even during the battle of the Wilderness he found time to write to Halleck: "I wish you would send me all the information you have from Sherman, by Bull Run, and all information from the James river expedition." It cannot be too often repeated that the campaign from the Rapidan was only one part of a comprehensive scheme, in which Butler, and Sigel, and even Sherman, were constantly receiving directions from the general-in-chief, while the movements under Grant's own eye were in their turn co-operative with those in Georgia and West Virginia, as well as on the James. In order to appreciate or even understand his strategy, it is necessary to bear this fact constantly in mind.

From the battle-field of the Wilderness, two main roads run south-easterly and nearly parallel, to Spottsylvania, emerging from the forest a mile or two north of the court-house. On Saturday, the 7th of May, the Brock road, as far as Todd's tavern, was

in the hands of Grant, while the more western route, by Shady Grove, remained in the possession of Lee. The rebels also held the intervening country, a strip about three miles wide, and in this space, covered by their entrenchments, were several less important roads, by which they commanded a somewhat shorter line to Spottsylvania. The distance, however, to the court-house, from either army, was little more than fifteen miles. Beyond Todd's tavern, the Brock road itself was occupied by Stuart's cavalry, which had retreated in this direction after Sheridan's fight on Saturday afternoon. This almost amounted to a possession of Spottsylvania by the enemy ; for although, of course, Stuart could not hold the position against Grant's columns, he might very well delay the national advance until the rebel infantry arrived.

The Catharpen road runs at right angles to all these others, intersecting the westernmost at Shady Grove, and coming into the Brock road at Todd's tavern ; it thus connects the two principal avenues on which the hostile armies lay. The river Po, a tortuous stream, with rugged banks and difficult to ford, crosses the Catharpen road at Corbyn's bridge, two miles west of Todd's tavern, and in its after windings strikes the road from Shady Grove to Spottsylvania, at a wooden bridge west of the Block-house ; and again at Snell's bridge, it crosses the road running south from the court-house to Richmond. These bridges were of the first importance, for they commanded Lee's only approaches to Spottsylvania, and Sheridan, who had been ordered to keep a good look-out towards the enemy, disposed his force so as to secure all three positions. Wilson was ordered to advance on the left, by the Fredericksburg road, to

take possession of the court-house, and then move into position at Snell's bridge ; while Gregg and Merritt, on the right, were directed to proceed to the same point, crossing the Po at Corbyn's bridge, and then advance by Shady Grove and the Block-house road. The cavalry had been marching and fighting incessantly for now four days, and the battle at Todd's tavern, on the 7th, had lasted until after dark, but all three divisions were to move again at daylight. Had these orders been carried out, every avenue to Spottsylvania would have been closed to the rebel army.

But Meade arrived at Todd's tavern at midnight, where Gregg and Merritt were bivouacked. Sheridan's orders had not yet arrived, and Meade at once issued new and different ones, Gregg being simply instructed to move to the vicinity of Corbyn's bridge, and watch the roads from Parker's store, while Merritt was ordered to open the Brock road to Spottsylvania ; Snell's bridge and that on the Block-house road, the most important points of all, being utterly ignored. Meade, indeed, directed Merritt to place a brigade at the Block-house,\* and to picket the roads leading to the court-house ; but the Block-house was a mile from the bridge, which was not mentioned in the order ; and one brigade could hardly withstand the rebel army. Sheridan had ordered two divisions to hold these points.

The blunders, however, were not all on one side. Lee had early discovered the movement of Grant's trains, which, in order to leave a way for the troops, had been sent on Saturday afternoon, in advance of Sedgwick, on the road to Chancellorsville. But the rebel leader read the signs entirely wrong, and sup-

\* Merritt's report does not mention the Block-house.



posed that Grant was falling back on Fredericksburg. Under this delusion, on Saturday night, he ordered Anderson, now in command of Longstreet's corps, to move to Spottsylvania *in the morning*. The woods, however, were on fire, and Anderson could find no place to bivouac, and began his march at once, without the sanction of Lee, who remained in his mistake all night. Even on the 8th, Early, who had been placed in temporary command of Hill's corps, was ordered "to move by *Todd's tavern, along the Brock road*, to Spottsylvania court-house, as soon as his front was clear of the enemy ;"\* and still later, Lee telegraphed the good news to Richmond: "The enemy has abandoned his position, and is moving towards Fredericksburg. This army is in motion on his right flank, and our advance is now at Spottsylvania court-house." His advance had arrived there so soon, by accident, and without the orders of Lee, a circumstance which he neglected to report, while the whole movement of the rebel army was based on a blunder of its commander, one entire corps being ordered to move by a road actually in possession of Grant. Yet these very mistakes were destined to thwart the well-laid scheme of the national general. So manifold and marvellous are the chances of war.

Wilson moved promptly on the morning of the 8th, according to Sheridan's orders, which, in his case, had not been reversed by Meade ; and brushing away a mounted picket, crossed the Ny and pushed into Spottsylvania, where he encountered and dispersed a body of rebel cavalry. He was about advancing upon Snell's bridge, to make the junction

\* Early's Memoir, page 22.

ordered with Merritt and Gregg, when he heard heavy firing from the north, on the roads from Todd's tavern and Piney Branch church, and moving towards the sound of battle, his advance soon found itself behind a line of rebel infantry—two divisions of Anderson's command.

Merritt, meanwhile, had encountered greater difficulty in carrying out Meade's instructions, for the Fifth corps was already moving on the Brock road, by which he had been ordered to advance, and the infantry and cavalry soon became entangled. Great confusion and delay ensued, and when Merritt's men at last made their way to the front, they were met by Stuart's cavalry, which had thrown up temporary breastworks to obstruct the national advance. Both sides fought dismounted, and the rebels probably thought they were confronting only cavalry, since Lee himself believed that Grant was moving towards Fredericksburg; the opposition was therefore vigorous, and only ceased when the head of Warren's column appeared.

But by this time Anderson also had come upon the field, having crossed the Po without opposition, at the wooden bridge, obliged Wilson to evacuate Spottsylvania,\* and posted his own command advantageously on a ridge, just north of the point where the Brock road enters that from Shady Grove. The delay created by Stuart's men had enabled Anderson to throw up breastworks, but his presence was as yet unknown to the national army.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when Warren's

\* As soon as Sheridan learned the change which Meade had made in the orders to Merritt and Gregg, and the consequent isolation of Wilson, he sent orders to that officer to fall back from Spottsylvania.

advance arrived, pushing aside the rebel cavalry. The weather was very hot and dry, the woods were dense, and in many places had taken fire, and the stifling smoke was mingled with clouds of dust raised by the movement of the column. The men had been marching all night and fighting since daybreak, and after driving Stuart's force, had thought to find an open road to Spottsylvania, but, instead of this, they came upon Anderson's command, ensconced behind earthworks breast-high. Griffin and Robinson, however, at once advanced, hardly yet anticipating a serious resistance, but at the unexpected development of infantry, the men recoiled in some confusion. Robinson fell, severely wounded. The force, nevertheless, was speedily rallied, for the enemy made no pursuit, and Warren now brought up the whole of his command, leading a brigade in person. A severe encounter ensued, but Crawford drove the rebels for some distance on the right, while Cutler, now in command of Wadsworth's division, did the same on the left, and Warren succeeded in establishing his line immediately in front of the enemy. He deemed it best, however, to await the arrival of other troops before renewing the assault.

Grant had breakfasted at daylight, on soldiers' rations, which his escort shared with him on the road, and in the early morning his head-quarters were removed to Piney Branch church, a point central to the whole army. Warren now had the advance, on the Brock road; Hancock had been halted at Todd's tavern, to guard the approach from Shady Grove; Sedgwick had arrived at Piney Branch church, and Burnside, who guarded the trains, was on the left, at Aldrich's. As soon as the opposition to



Warren was known to be serious, one division of Sedgwick, and shortly afterwards the whole Sixth corps was ordered to his support, so as, if possible, to crush Anderson,\* before the remainder of Lee's army could arrive. Burnside and Hancock were also notified of the situation, and directed to be in readiness to advance. Meanwhile, the movement of Early towards Todd's tavern had been discovered, although its full significance was not yet known, but Hancock at once sent out a force on the Catharpen road, and the rebel approach was checked without much difficulty. Lee had evidently anticipated no opposition whatever at the tavern. "This affair," says Early, "developed the fact that the enemy was in possession of Todd's tavern and the Brock road, and a continuation of my march would have led through his entire army."† He accordingly attempted no further advance; but Hancock was of course de-

\* "It has been definitely ascertained that Longstreet's corps, at least two divisions of it, are at Spottsylvania. Warren's whole corps has engaged it. Sedgwick has been ordered up, with a view of crushing it if possible."—*Grant to Burnside, May 8, 1 P.M.*

† Early says: "On the morning of the 8th, it was discovered that the enemy was leaving our front and moving towards Spottsylvania court-house." Now, the movement was discovered on the 7th, for on that evening Anderson began his march; and, according to Lee's telegram, Grant was supposed to be falling back on *Fredericksburg*. Doubtless, Early thought that Grant's movement was first known on the 8th, because he was then first informed of it; but this is the error into which subordinates are so apt to fall, judging of the whole from what they happen to know of a part. Early, it is evident, was not in the confidence of Lee, and what he says of his commander's views or intentions has little value. He is authority only for the orders he himself gave or received, and for the movements made by the troops under his command.

tained to cover the right flank and the rear of the army.\*

It was not until late in the afternoon that the second attack was made on Anderson; both Sedgwick and Warren had been repeatedly urged to move with dispatch and assault with vigor, but it was nearly dark before their dispositions were complete, and then not half of Sedgwick's command became engaged, and only a single division of Warren's. No result of importance was attained.† By this time Lee had become aware of the scope and design of Grant's movements, and was concentrating his forces around Spottsylvania. The rebel army was

\* The disposition thus made of Hancock's force has been severely criticized by writers who were ignorant of the fact that Early's entire corps was on the Catharpen road all day, on the 8th, moving towards Todd's tavern. Of course, if Hancock had not been detained at this very point, Early might have advanced upon the rear and flank of Meade, and done infinite damage.

† "Prisoners were taken by Wilson, who reported that two divisions of Longstreet's" [Anderson's] "corps had just come up, they having marched all night. General Grant at once gave orders for attacking these troops with the whole of Warren's corps, to whose support Sedgwick was hurrying up, in order to destroy them before the rest of the rebel army could arrive. Warren, however, proceeded with exceeding caution, and when he finally did attack, sent a single division at a time, and was constantly repulsed. The general attack Generals Grant and Meade directed was never made, for reasons which I have not yet been able to learn, but successive assaults were made upon this and that point in the rebel positions, with no decisive results."—*Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to War Department, May 9.*

Grant was so averse to writing long despatches that the government sent the Honorable Charles A. Dana, at this time Assistant Secretary of War, to his head-quarters, to report more fully than the general-in-chief was in the habit of doing. Dana's despatches were not submitted to Grant, and furnish evidence which will not be suspected of partiality.

thus planted directly across Grant's line of march, and the same difficulty which had been confronted in the Wilderness was again to be overcome. The two accidents, that Sheridan's orders had been changed by Meade, and that Lee's orders had been transcended by Anderson, had frustrated the purpose of the national movement. The enemy had secured a defensive position, where, instead of delivering, he must receive attack.

Lee, however, could claim no credit for having out-generalled his rival. He had utterly misapprehended Grant's design, and acted on the misapprehension. Even when he thought his enemy was retreating, he did not propose to follow till the next day, and then he divided his army and sent a third of it on the wrong road, wasting the strength of Early's entire command for twenty-four hours; and was only relieved from his dilemma by chance, and the talents of his subordinates. It was the soldierly instincts of Stuart, leading him to oppose the national advance, although he probably had no idea of its meaning, and the rapid marching of Anderson, also without any specific object, that secured Spottsylvania for Lee. Doubtless, their superior knowledge of the country, as well as the fact that Stuart was already in possession of the Brock road, facilitated the rebel movements; still, the two corps commanders are entitled to the credit of their achievement. But if fortune was thus thrust upon Lee by his lieutenants, it was just the other way with Grant. He had been baffled by the same accidents that had assisted his adversary, and by circumstances which his own generals should have rendered impossible. If Meade had known the



existence and the importance of the bridges over the Po, when he found the cavalry without orders, he would doubtless have given them the same directions which Sheridan had meant them to receive;\* and it certainly seems that a greater degree of vigor shown by the corps commanders at the front would not have allowed the prize of the entire movement to slip from their grasp.

But though disappointed, Grant was not discouraged. What might have deterred some men only made him more resolute. No syllable of censure escaped him; he lost no time in criticizing or complaining, but at once attempted to repair the situation. Lee had indeed stumbled into a good position, but he showed no inclination whatever to attack; all his effort was to withstand the national army; thus corroborating Grant's belief that the rebels had suffered too severely in the Wilderness to be able to cope with him again in the open field. Unfortunately, a defensive position nearly equalized their advantages, or rather gave the superiority to Lee.

The country around Spottsylvania is undulating, and heavily wooded, like the Wilderness. Patches of cleared land occur at intervals where artillery can be employed, but for the most part, the region is covered with forests of cedar and pine, while a dense undergrowth of hazel and scrub oak precludes the use of any arm but musketry. A succession of parallel ridges sweeps across the landscape, and the highest range, bounding the horizon as the national troops looked south, concealed the cluster of houses

\* General Meade himself told me on the 9th of May, that if he had been better acquainted with the country he would have given orders to secure these bridges.

known as Spottsylvania, lying between the rivers Po and Ny. These two streams run south-easterly, only three or four miles apart, and their wooded banks and marshy valleys offered strong natural defences, which the rebel soldiery made haste to seize. On the morning of the 9th, Lee's line extended along the irregular ridge that separates the Po and Ny, almost enclosing Spottsylvania in a semi-circle, and covering all the roads that centre there. The crest was crowned with strong earthworks, protected by a formidable abatis, and the approaches, rendered difficult by the tangled undergrowth, and the swamp land in front, were swept from every point by a fire of musketry and sometimes of artillery. Anderson had the left, near his original position, resting on the Po; Ewell was at the centre, facing both north and east; while on the morning of the 9th, Early was moved by Shady Grove around to the right of the line, so as to guard the approach from Fredericksburg, and look to the crossing of the Ny.

In order to confront this line, Warren remained opposed to Anderson, with Sedgwick on his left and Hancock on the right, the latter still holding Todd's tavern, and connecting with Warren by the Brock road; while Burnside, who at first had been held in readiness to continue the march south, was now instructed to leave one division at Piney Branch to guard the trains, and move the rest of his corps towards Gate's, on the extreme left of the army. These dispositions brought Grant's forces so close to the enemy that no advance could take place on either side without a battle. Lee, however, contented himself with fortifying his position, while Grant and his subordinates were eagerly seeking a

weak point in the rebel line, at which to deal an effective blow.

Before noon of the 8th of May, Sheridan received verbal directions from the general-in-chief to cut loose from the army and engage the rebel cavalry.\* He was to cut the two railroads in the rear of Lee, to do all the damage possible to the enemy's supplies, and when out of forage, to proceed to the James river, replenish from Butler's stores, and then return to Meade. He started at daybreak on the 9th, and took with him rations for half a day.

Meanwhile, Grant's head-quarters had been removed from Piney Branch to a position immediately in rear of Warren; and after dark on the 8th, he sent word to Burnside: "The enemy have made a strong resistance here, so much so, that no advance will be attempted to-morrow. . . . If you have not already two divisions at the front, get them up by six o'clock to-morrow morning, so that if they should be called for, they can be marched from the Gate, directly on Spottsylvania." Accordingly, at daybreak on the 9th, Burnside pushed forward Wilcox's command as far as Gayle's, the point where the road from Fredericksburg is crossed by the Ny.† Here Wilcox found a rebel picket, but speedily drove it in, seizing the bridge and throwing one of his

\* Sheridan also received written orders, which were transmitted through Meade.

† Wilcox could not find the "Gate," and supposed "Gayle's" to be the point indicated in his instructions. There were in the immediate neighborhood of Spottsylvania two places called "Gayle's," and two known as "Gate's." Throughout this entire campaign the repeated recurrence of the same local names added greatly to the perplexities of the national commanders.



brigades across the river. About a quarter of a mile beyond, he encountered a brigade from Anderson's command, and a force of dismounted cavalry, doubtless the right of the entire rebel army. Some sharp fighting now occurred, but Wilcox brought up a second brigade, and sent word to Burnside that he was heavily attacked. The report was forwarded to Grant, who at once directed Meade to ascertain if any considerable movement had been made in the direction of Wilcox. "Should there prove to be, it would become necessary to recall the trains and push the enemy's left flank vigorously." To Burnside, at the same time, he said: "Direct Wilcox to entrench and hold his position strongly, only falling back at the last extremity, expecting the enemy, if they have gone in force towards him, to be attacked from here." This was Grant's invariable method in battle. He always sought to repel attack, not only by resistance at the threatened point, but by counter-assault elsewhere.

Before noon, it was discovered that Early's force on the Catharpen road had been withdrawn from Hancock's front; and at 12.45 P.M., Grant forwarded to Meade another despatch from Wilcox, adding: "This, together with the report from Hancock, would indicate the enemy moving towards Gate's. If that is the case, we must follow and attack vigorously." It was never his tactics to follow and then await attack, as Lee had done after the battle of the Wilderness. But although Early was now moved to the right of the rebel army, and posted so as to cover the Fredericksburg approach to Spottsylvania,\* Wilcox succeeded in establishing himself

\* Early's Memoir, page 23.

without serious opposition on the southern bank of the Ny. A second division of Burnside came up to his support, and the position was maintained. It was within a mile and a half of Spottsylvania court-house.

During the morning of the 9th, as Sedgwick was reconnoitring along his front, he was struck by a bullet from a rebel sharpshooter, which entered his brain, killing him instantly. Grant had been with him at the spot where this occurred, only a few moments before. The general-in-chief considered this loss equal to that of a division of infantry. In no corps commander in the army had he greater confidence. Brigadier-General Horatio G. Wright was at once ordered to assume command of the Sixth corps.

About noon, despatches were received from Washington. Sherman had advanced into Georgia, so far as to threaten Resaca, and Johnston was falling back before him. Sigel had not yet encountered the enemy, but announced that if he received no orders to the contrary, he would move up the Shenandoah valley and try to connect with Crook.

The news from Butler was dubious. That officer claimed to have done all that was expected of him, but called for reinforcements as soon as he met the enemy. On the 5th, he reported having seized City Point; on the 6th, at 2.30 P.M., that he had not been disturbed in the night, and had taken the positions indicated by Grant; on the 7th, he said: "Sent out a reconnoissance yesterday on the Petersburg railroad. Have sent two divisions this morning to take possession of the road. Up to this moment, have exceeded my most sanguine expectations." Nevertheless, in the same despatch he an-

nounced: "We are entrenching, for fear of accident to the army of the Potomac." Later on the 7th, he reported having destroyed a portion of the railroad, after pretty severe fighting, and asked: "If Grant has been in any way successful, can we have ten thousand of the reserves? . . . If the army of the Potomac is unsuccessful, then we want them here for the safety of the country. Please send them forward. . . . In three days my line will be perfect." Grant at once directed Halleck: "If matters are still favorable with Butler, send him all the reinforcements you can." It was his uniform policy to reinforce a victorious subordinate, and as far as possible, reap all the results of victory.

Several times during the operations of the 9th of May, Grant had observed indications that Lee was moving in the direction of Fredericksburg. The disappearance of Early from Hancock's front, the extension of the rebel right, the resistance to Wilcox, all suggested this manœuvre, and in view of its possibility, Grant held himself in readiness to gather up his own force and move entirely to the west, thus placing himself between the enemy and Richmond.\* At one P.M., he said to Halleck: "The enemy are now moving from our immediate front, either to interpose between us and Fredericksburg, or to get the inside road to Richmond;" and to

\* "General Grant's orders last night were not to renew the fighting to-day; but if, as now appears to be the case, Lee has left anything open in front of our right by massing on our left, he may attack at this weakened point of their line, with a view of passing towards Richmond on that side. This attack, if determined upon, will be made by Hancock, who holds our right."—*Dana, May 9.*



Meade, at the same time: "The enemy have disappeared from our right, moving in the direction of Gate's evidently, which will enable us to follow from here." The movement towards Fredericksburg was one which in Lee's circumstances Grant would have been almost certain to attempt, for it menaced all the communications of the national army, and he naturally expected that Lee would have sufficient audacity to prompt him to such a course.

As soon, therefore, as it was known that the rebel force on the Catharpen road had been withdrawn, Hancock was ordered to move by the Brock road, and take position on Warren's right, on the high open ground commanding the valley of the Po. Early in the afternoon, three divisions of the Second corps were formed in line of battle along this crest, the fourth being still detained to guard the position at Todd's tavern. The ground between the heights and the river was at once explored, and Hancock was ordered to force a passage; and at six P.M., the divisions of Barlow and Gibbon were put in motion, that of Birney following. The enemy held the southern bank of the stream with only a small body of cavalry and two pieces of artillery; but the passage was extremely difficult, owing to the depth of the water and the thick undergrowth along the banks. Brooke's brigade of Barlow's division had the advance; it pushed across vigorously, and at once took possession of the roads between Gladys run and the Po. Birney and Gibbon crossed on the right and left of Barlow, meeting with only slight resistance. The river runs east at the points where the passage was effected, but soon afterwards makes a sudden bend to the south, running then at right

angles with the Block-house road, and crossing it under a wooden bridge. It thus a second time confronted the advance. The troops were pushed rapidly forward along the road, for Hancock was anxious to reach the bridge and effect the second crossing before a halt was made; but night came on, and in the dense woods and the darkness it was impossible to maintain the line. Only the skirmishers reached the river, which they found too deep to ford, and Hancock was compelled to wait for morning. During the night, however, bridges were thrown across the river for infantry and artillery, at all three points in the rear where the troops had already crossed.

Thus, at nine P.M., Hancock had the right of Grant's command, his three divisions being on the southern side of the Po, while Barlow, facing east, on the Block-house road, had really turned the left of the rebel army. Warren was on the Brock and other roads converging towards the court-house, and held the right centre of the line; the Sixth corps formed the left centre, and Burnside the extreme left; two divisions of the Ninth corps being at Gayle's, while the remainder reached as far back as Aldrich's, guarding the rear of the army and the trains. During the afternoon, Mott's division of the Second corps had been withdrawn from Todd's tavern, and placed in position on the left of Wright, so as to fill the gap between him and Burnside. The national line was thus complete.

The manœuvring of these two days had been able on both sides. When Lee supposed that Grant was falling back on Fredericksburg, he soon prepared to follow, notwithstanding his losses in the

Wilderness; but on arriving at Spottsylvania, he found the national army still with its front towards Richmond, and although surprised, and doubtless disappointed, he brought up two corps rapidly to stop the way. Grant, on the other hand, thwarted in his original intention of turning the rebel right, but quickly apprehending Lee's designs, at once made dispositions to move by the enemy's now unguarded left, towards Richmond; and as soon as Early's removal offered the opportunity, he pushed forward the Second corps, and threatened all the communications of the rebel army. Each player in the mighty game seemed fertile in resource, and ready to check the most unexpected or most menacing move of his antagonist.

Lee soon perceived the formidable character of Hancock's movement, and during the night of the 9th, two divisions of Early's corps were ordered from Spottsylvania back to the endangered point. Field's division had constituted the left of Anderson's command, and rested on the Po, in front of Hancock; and early on the morning of the 10th, Mahone's division of Early's corps started to take position on the left of Field; while Heth, from the same command, was directed to move by a circuitous road in rear of the court-house, and to come in on the extreme left of the rebel line.\*

At daybreak, Hancock made a close examination of the wooden bridge. The rebels were in strong force on the eastern bank, entrenched, and commanding the bridge and its approaches, but showed no disposition to prevent the reconnoissance. After a close survey, Hancock determined not to attempt to

\* Early's Memoir, page 24.



carry the bridge, but pushed out Brooke's brigade to the right, under cover of three or four regiments of Birney's command. Brooke succeeded in crossing the river about half way between the bridge and the mouth of Glady run, and discovered the enemy's line to consist of strong earthworks occupied by artillery and infantry. Early's force had doubtless arrived, and the position was now too formidable to be attacked with any hope of success.

Grant, however, believed correctly that in order to reinforce the rebel left, Lee had been obliged to weaken the other portions of his line ; and orders were therefore issued at ten o'clock for an assault on the enemy's centre in the afternoon. Wright was to combine with Warren, and Hancock's movement was suspended, two divisions of the Second corps being ordered to support the proposed attack, while Hancock himself was directed to assume command of all the troops engaged. In obedience to these orders, Gibbon's division was at once recalled to the northern bank of the Po, and formed on Warren's right ; Birney followed, and was massed in reserve in rear of Warren, leaving Barlow alone to hold the ground on the southern side of the river. At the same time, Burnside was directed to "reconnoitre the enemy's position, . . . and if you have any possible chance of attacking their right, do it with vigor, and with all the force you can bring to bear."

At 9.30 A.M., Grant sent word to Halleck : "The enemy hold our front in very strong force, and evince a strong disposition to interpose between us and Richmond to the last. *I shall take no backward step.* . . . Send to Belle Plain all the infantry

you can rake and scrape.”\* These were the first reinforcements ordered after the advance from Culpeper.

During the withdrawal of Birney's troops from the southern side of the river, that portion of his force which had been sent to the right, to cover Brooke, was attacked near Gladys run and driven in; and at the same time, the skirmishers of Barlow became sharply engaged. The enemy was evidently advancing in force. But the orders had now been issued for an attack upon the rebel centre, and Grant of course did not desire to bring on a battle in this part of the field. Hancock was accordingly directed to withdraw his whole command to the north bank of the Po, and to give personal supervision to the movement.

The manœuvre was one of extreme difficulty as well as danger. The troops were to cross a deep and rapid stream in the presence of a superior and advancing foe, while by apparent retreat their own spirits were sure to be depressed, and those of the enemy raised. Two of Barlow's brigades now occupied an advanced position south of the Blockhouse road, and behind them, two other brigades were formed along the road itself, their left resting on a sharp crest, within a few hundred paces of the wooden bridge. In rear of the second line, was a piece of woods, and then a broad open plain extending to the point where a pontoon bridge had

\* The same despatch shows Grant's estimate of his forces on the 10th of May. "Please have supplies of forage and provisions sent at once, and fifty rounds of ammunition for *one hundred thousand men*." The entire despatch will be found in the Appendix.

been laid. In front of the road and parallel with it, Barlow had thrown up a line of earthworks, and all the batteries but one were sent to the northern bank, where they took position so as to command the national bridges.

The movement began at two o'clock. The advanced brigades of Brooke and Browne were first recalled, and formed on the right of the other two, those of Smyth and Miles, about a hundred paces in rear of the breastworks. As soon as this manœuvre was executed, Miles and Smyth were ordered back to the crest on the southern bank, where they formed line of battle, throwing up a rough breastwork of fence rails and such other material as they could collect on the ground. They were soon prepared to resist the enemy, if he should be able to overpower Brooke and Browne and attempt to carry the bridges.

These dispositions were hardly completed, when the rebels, having driven in the national skirmishers, pressed forward and occupied the breastworks along the road; then advancing in line of battle, supported by columns, they attacked with great vigor and determination, but were met by a heavy and destructive fire, which soon compelled them to fall back in confusion, and with severe loss. Encouraged, however, by the withdrawal of Miles and Smyth from the front line, which they doubtless mistook for a forced retreat, they re-formed, and again assailed the brigades of Brooke and Browne. The contest now became close, and the rebels, flushed with the anticipation of an easy victory, seemed determined to crush the little force in their front. They pushed forward with loud yells, and



made their way close up to Hancock's line, delivering a heavy volley of musketry as they advanced ; but the national troops were firm, and their fire was so continuous and deadly, that the rebels broke again and fled in great disorder, leaving the ground in Hancock's front strewn with their dead and wounded.

But in the heat of the contest, the woods on the right and in rear of Barlow had taken fire, and the flames now approached so close as to render it impossible to retain the position longer. The last repulse of the rebels, however, had quieted them for a while, and during the lull in the fight, Barlow directed Brooke and Browne to retire to the northern bank of the Po. Their right and rear enveloped in the burning woods, their front exposed to the enemy, the men nevertheless moved steadily back towards the river. As soon, however, as the rebels perceived that the line was retiring, they again advanced, but were again checked by the national troops, who retreated through the woods in good order and with great deliberation, though many fell on the way, the wounded perishing in the flames.

One section of a battery had been pushed forward during the fight to within a short distance of Brooke's line, and when that officer was ordered to retire, the horses attached to one of the pieces became terrified by the fire, and unmanageable, dragging the gun between two trees, where it was so firmly wedged that it could not be removed, and the supports were compelled to abandon it. This was the first gun ever lost by the Second corps.

After emerging from the wood, Brooke had still the open plain to traverse between the road and the river ; this plain was swept by the enemy's musketry,

as well as by the artillery on the heights above the wooden bridge, while Browne, in retiring, was compelled to pass through the entire wood, which was burning furiously; each brigade, however, succeeded in reaching the river, after severe loss, Brooke crossing by the pontoon bridge, and Browne on his right a little further up the stream. As soon as the passage was effected, Barlow ordered Smyth to follow and take position on the northern bank, where his fire would cover the bridges. Miles was thus left alone, to tear up the bridges before he crossed. The rebels, now seeing only a few regiments remaining on the southern bank, attempted to follow across the open plain, but were at once driven back by Miles and the artillery on the heights. After this, they made no further advance; and Miles completed his crossing, having first taken up one bridge and destroyed the other.\*

The rebels were unaware of the fact that Hancock's withdrawal had been ordered early in the day, and supposed it was entirely owing to their advance. Heth, Hill, and Lee, accordingly, published congratulations to their troops on having driven the national forces out of entrenched lines; but had not Barlow's orders been imperative, there would have been little cause for congratulation. As it was, the manœuvre directed by the general-in-chief was exactly executed, while the skill of the officers and the soldiership of the men equalled any display of those qualities during the entire campaign.

\* Hancock and Burnside alone of the corps commanders made reports of this campaign. I am, therefore, able to follow the details of their movements more closely than in the case of the other corps.

The movement of Hancock across the Po was one of decided importance; the original purpose, as already shown, having been to take advantage of the possible advance of Lee's whole force towards Fredericksburg; and if this should prove certain, to move the national army rapidly to the right, and thus isolate Lee from Richmond. But whatever designs the enemy may have had upon Fredericksburg were speedily frustrated when Hancock turned the rebel left. Early was at once recalled to protect the exposed flank and rear,\* as well as the trains, and any initiative by Lee was rendered impossible. It was not, indeed, desirable to continue the movement of the Second corps, for the enemy was now prepared, and massing on the threatened point, while Grant would have been obliged to fight with the river dividing his army; but Lee's attention had been peremptorily called both to the right and left, and a serious assault was preparing to penetrate the rebel centre, if possible, before they could bring reinforcements from their widely extended wings.

Meanwhile, the national skirmishers had driven the rebels behind their breastworks all along the centre, and in front of Wright the enemy was forced back nearly a mile. Nevertheless, the weak point of the defence was difficult to discover, for wherever the national troops touched Lee, he still seemed strong. Holding the inner arc of the circle, his lines were of course much shorter than Grant's, as well as concealed by the forest, so that he was able

\* "The position which the enemy had attained would have enabled him to completely enfilade Field's position and get possession of our line of communication to the rear, within a very short distance of which he was."—*Early*, page 27.



to move his men not only without detection, but with greater celerity.

It was, however, determined to make the assault in front of Wright and Warren; and at eleven o'clock, Warren pushed forward two brigades of Gibbon's division, temporarily under his command, to reconnoitre in force. He was obstinately resisted, and soon retired with loss, but not without having acquired important knowledge of the ground. Soon after this, the danger to Barlow's movement seemed so imminent that Birney was sent back to cover it from the heights north of the Po. At the same time, Warren attempted another preliminary manœuvre: he was ordered to push forward two divisions, with the view of gaining sufficient ground to form his lines for the principal assault; for in his front the undergrowth was almost impenetrable. It was also hoped that his advance might afford relief to Barlow,\* so sorely pressed, but Warren was again obliged to retire, after suffering severely. The movement, however, accomplished one of the objects of Grant, for no further aid was sent to the rebel left, and Barlow was able to re-cross the Po.

Notwithstanding these rebuffs, Warren reported in favor of an immediate assault,† and believing that the rebel centre had now been weakened by

\* Dana wrote on this day, before the assault: "At two P.M., the rebels fell in force upon Barlow, who with one division had been left by Hancock on the south side of the Po; attack has been repulsed, but it has rendered it impossible for Barlow to cross to the north side of the river. Birney has been sent to his support, and Warren ordered to attack for his relief."

† "The opportunity for attack immediately is reported to be so favorable by General Warren, that he is ordered to attack at once."—*Humphreys to Hancock, May 10, 3.15 P.M.*

the withdrawal of troops to oppose to Barlow, Grant ordered the principal attack at once, without waiting for the return of Birney. Wright and Warren were to move simultaneously, and with Warren the division of Gibbon, while Mott was also ordered to advance on the left of the Sixth corps. It was now about four o'clock in the afternoon.

The point of attack was a densely wooded hill in front of Warren, its crest crowned with earthworks, and the entire front swept by cross and enfilading fires of musketry and artillery. The approach was rendered still more hazardous by a heavy growth of low cedar trees, most of them dead, the long bayonet-like branches of which, interlaced, and pointing in all directions, presented an almost impassable barrier. Grant and Meade took position on an elevated plateau opposite the hill, to watch the battle; but here, as in the Wilderness, the woods prevented them from observing in detail the progress of the fight. All they could discern was the wooded ridge in the background, the swamp at its base covered with underbrush, and nearer still, the lines of the troops about to enter the thicket. A curtain of cloud and smoke hung over the valley, reddened by the afternoon sun, or rent by occasional flashes of artillery. The shouts of command and the cries of the wounded could be heard, until the preliminary rattle of musketry rose into the roar of a general engagement, and then came the echoes of the cheers as the troops rushed into the charge. Across the open plain, through reaches of wood, through depths of swamp, the lines of the battalions struggled forward under a fearful fire, until they were lost to view in the jungle and the smoke of battle. Only

the wounded came continually staggering out of the cloud. Then followed a few moments of anxious expectation, of straining eyes and ears to catch some indication of the event, while the troops pressed on and up within the woods, until at one or two points, they mounted the enemy's breastworks. But their greeting was too terrible ; they stood for a moment on the crest, then wavered, and fell back, disordered by the enfilading fire on either side. As they retreated, the dry woods burst into a blaze, and numbers of the wounded were burned alive. The enemy, however, made no pretence to follow, and the troops reoccupied the ground they had held before the assault.\* But many never returned.

On the left, meanwhile, a brilliant success had been achieved. A large portion of the ground in front of Wright was an impracticable morass, the only good approach being on his extreme left. Here he massed a storming party of twelve regiments, under Colonel Upton, the young commander of the 120th New York Volunteers, to be supported by Mott's division of the Second corps. Upton formed his battalions in four lines, and late in the afternoon, he led them on. The men seemed inspired from the start, and rushed forward with tremendous force. Allowing nothing to stop them, creeping on hands and knees over all obstacles, even under fire, they climbed the hill and completely broke the lines in their front, capturing an entire brigade of infantry and a battery of artillery. After

\* Mr. Dana thus reports : "The general assault took place about 6.30 P.M. I witnessed it on Warren's front, where it was executed with the caution and absence of comprehensive *ensemble* which seem to characterize that officer." This criticism appears to me too severe.



this success Upton did not halt, but turned at once to the right and left, before the rebels had time to reform their disordered ranks, and drove them along their own entrenchments a quarter of a mile. Everything promised absolute victory. But Mott, who had been ordered to support the movement, was slow, and more than slow; though repeatedly urged, he did not advance within supporting distance, and attacked with feebleness, making no impression on the enemy, and desisting before he knew whether or not he could succeed. Upton was thus left thrust forward, without cover or support, inside the enemy's line, and night was coming on. He held every inch he had gained, but it was impossible to maintain him in this advanced position without supports of the same mettle as himself; and Grant reluctantly gave the order for him to be withdrawn. But the men wept when they were commanded to abandon the lines they had won, and their noble unwillingness was reported to Grant. He felt the importance of encouraging such a spirit, the very essence of soldiership, the seed of victory. The order was revoked, and another assault was directed, on the right, to distract the rebels from Upton, and if possible, enable him to remain.

Hancock had by this time arrived upon the field, with Birney's division. A furious cannonade was maintained while the troops that Warren had led were re-formed, and at half-past six, the untired and undaunted Fifth corps, with two divisions of the Sixth, again advanced, this time under the immediate command of Hancock. But the same obstacles were encountered which had forced the troops to retire two hours before, and although they again reached,

and again even overleapt the breastworks, they were unable to hold them, and fell back at dark, with serious loss. Price, a gallant brigadier in the Fifth corps, was killed in the advance. That corps indeed never bore less than its share of the brunt of any battle, and none of its officers, of whatever grade, failed to set a worthy example to their soldiers.

When this repulse occurred, the danger to Upton became so imminent, that he was recalled to the position he had held before the assault. He was obliged to leave the guns he had captured, but brought off his prisoners, and was not disturbed. Next day he was named a brigadier-general, having won his spurs on the field.

Meanwhile, on the extreme left, Burnside had pushed forward to within a quarter of a mile of Spottsylvania court-house. The rebels were massed on the other flank, and although this advance was creditable, it had not been hazardous. The position that was attained, however, might have been of immense advantage, for Burnside had completely turned the right of the rebel army. But neither he nor the enemy was aware of this important fact; the country was new to the national officers, and the Ninth corps was isolated from the remainder of the command; the enormous advantage which had been acquired was thus not used, and Burnside was drawn in nearly a mile, so that he might connect with the left of the army. Stevenson, the commander of the First division of the Ninth corps, was this day killed by a rebel rifleman, while standing near his own head-quarters. The sharpshooters of the enemy were often perched in the trees, out of sight, and of course above the ordinary line of fire,

and from these safe hiding-places picked off their prey, aiming at individual officers.

The results of this day, although disappointing, were not disheartening. They indeed proved the rebels to be wary, ready, active, brave. Wherever, on the right, or left, or at the centre, Grant sought to envelope or to penetrate their line, he found his enemy panoplied in close defensive strength. All day Lee thwarted every attempt to circumvent or overpower him; all day he held off splendidly his ardent adversary. But he made no advance, even when opportunity offered; he followed up no advantage; he could not overwhelm Barlow, when only two brigades with a river to cross were exposed to the whole left wing of the rebel army; he did not even prevent this little force from taking up its bridges in the presence of three of his own divisions; he made no attempt to pursue the gallant soldiers of Warren, when four times in one day they were repulsed from an impregnable position; he did not crush the isolated Upton. The genius of the leader as well as the valor of his men was reserved for negative displays. Grant recognized the same strength and the same spirit with which he had contended in the Wilderness, but less aggressive now. Lee was still desperate, determined, defiant, but always awaiting attack, and with one exception, always behind entrenchments, always at bay.

If the defence, however, was gallant and stubborn, the assaults were equally so; nothing could surpass the splendid steadiness of Barlow's men, or the nervous ardor of Upton's, or the unflinching persistency of Warren's; and it is harder to be persistent in renewed attacks than in prolonged defence,



for the ardor of assault evaporates in failure, and does not always come again at the call : but four times this day the Fifth corps had responded to the summons. Then, too, the defence that was offered by Barlow transcended the most valorous resistance of the rebels, for it was made outside of cover.

There was, however, one event of this battle, which, glorious in itself, and displaying the finest traits of leadership and soldiership, had also betrayed the existence of diametrically opposite qualities. The success of Upton had achieved that for which Grant had been striving ever since he crossed the Rapidan. The enemy's line had been completely broken ; not only pierced, but broken ; a foothold was gained inside the rebel works ; and yet this great advantage had been lost. The officers who should have followed it up, were derelict ; they failed entirely—and this, not because of any tremendous obstacles, not because they were forced back by a superior or unusually determined enemy, but simply because the proper effort was not opportunely and vigorously made. Had they done half so well as Upton, his position would have been maintained.\* Nothing

\* “There is but little doubt in my mind that the assault last evening would have proved entirely successful, if it had commenced one hour earlier, and had been heartily entered into by Mott's division and the Ninth corps.”—*Grant to Meade, May 11.*

“Late in the evening, Upton's brigade, Sixth corps, assaulted, and successfully carried the enemy's line in his front, capturing — guns and nine hundred prisoners ; but not being supported by Mott on his left, Upton was compelled to withdraw after dark, abandoning his guns.”—*Meade's Official Report, Nov. 1, 1869.*

“Further to the left, where Mott's division held ground between Wright and Burnside, we were disgraced by the retreat of that division without loss, and apparently without any considerable force to oppose them.”—*Dana, May 10.*

could be more dispiriting than to discover, when the enormous difficulties which everywhere presented themselves had been overcome, when the object of a battle, or the purpose of an assault was attained, that the effort had been thrown away, the assault not followed up, that the battle was still undecided. But to feebleness in subordinates, all commanders must be liable. Not every colonel is an Upton, nor every general a Barlow. If it had been otherwise, the war would have been over before the Wilderness.

But although the fighting of the 10th of May had been bloody and continuous, though every corps had been engaged, and at the close no ground was won, no palpable result attained, still the sacrifices were not in vain. This day did its share to produce the result at which the general-in-chief was aiming. Every manœuvre had a meaning, every assault was timed. There was no blind butting at the enemy, but a constant endeavor to discover his weak point, and to strike him between the joints. It was the fencing of antagonists who were masters of their weapons and of their art; each on the alert, though one always on the defensive; each conscious of the other's skill, anxious not to lose a chance, to parry every thrust, to make every blow tell; and each learning the temper and the tactics of his enemy; Lee constantly standing more and more on his guard; shutting himself up more and more behind his works; evidently determining that he could take no more chances, make no more attacks, that he had no unwary, or stupid, or timid adversary; and Grant confirmed every hour in his preconceived idea that his cue was to constantly engage the enemy, to fight

him at every turn, and strike him on every side, to persist under all circumstances and against all obstacles. Now for Grant to persist was for him to be Grant. So, the next day he wrote to the government: "*I propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer.*"\*

On the 11th of May, Butler furnished exciting news from "near Bermuda Hundred." "We have

\* "We have now ended the sixth day of very hard fighting. The result to this time is much in our favor, but our losses have been heavy, as well as those of the enemy. We have lost to this time eleven general officers, killed, wounded, and missing, and probably twenty thousand men. I think the loss of the enemy must be greater, we having taken over four thousand prisoners, while he has taken from us but few, except a few stragglers. I am now sending back to Belle Plain all my wagons for a fresh supply of provisions and ammunition, and propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer. . . . I am satisfied the enemy are very shaky, and are only kept up to the mark by the greatest exertions on the part of their officers, and by keeping them entrenched in every position they take. . . ."

This entire despatch will be found in the Appendix, where it is now for the first time printed without curtailment. It contained information which it was not deemed advisable to make public at the moment; but the spirit it breathed was recognized by the government, and the one famous line electrified the country. It was written, however, without any thought of effect, and simply uttered Grant's determination. On the morning of the 11th, the Honorable E. B. Washburne, who had accompanied the head-quarters from Culpeper, was about returning to Washington. As he mounted his horse, he asked the general-in-chief if he had any word to send to the President or the Secretary of War. Grant stepped into his tent, and, smoking his cigar, wrote the despatch, which Washburne carried in his pocket to the capital. The estimate of the national losses was based on the number of missing reported to Meade; but thousands were missing after these battles who returned to do good, and even heroic service afterwards.



landed here, entrenched ourselves, destroyed many miles of railroad, and got a position which with proper supplies we can hold out against the whole of Lee's army." He thus summed up his achievements: "Beauregard with a large portion of his command was left south, by the cutting of the railroad by Kautz. That portion which reached Petersburg under Hill, I have whipped to-day, killing and wounding many and taking many prisoners, after a severe and well-contested fight. General Grant will not be troubled with any further reinforcements to Lee from Beauregard's force." This was highly encouraging, but at the same time it redoubled Grant's anxiety lest any part of Lee's army should be subtracted, to aid in the defence of Richmond. In all the complicated strategy of the campaign the general-in-chief was obliged to consider this contingency, and so to occupy Lee that there should be no chance for the rebels to fall back rapidly by their interior and greatly shorter lines, and strike an overwhelming blow at Butler, before the army of the Potomac could follow, or interfere. On this day, however, he said to Halleck: "Up to this time, there is no indication of any part of Lee's army being detached for the defence of Richmond." One principal object of Sheridan's expedition to the James, was to cut the railroads between Lee and his capital, so that the rebel army could not in any event be moved by train; and this day came the welcome news that the cavalry had destroyed ten miles of the Virginia Central railroad, with cars, engines, telegraph wires, a million and a half of rations, and nearly all the medical stores of Lee's command.

By the army in front of Spottsylvania, the 11th of May was spent in reconnoitring and preparing for another assault. Mott was ordered to drive in the rebel skirmish line, for the sake of examining the ground in his front, but was only partially successful. It was, however, ascertained that a salient on the right centre of Lee's line offered a favorable point for attack; and at three P.M., Grant directed Meade to move Hancock under cover of night, by the rear of the Fifth and Sixth corps, so as to join Burnside in a vigorous assault at four o'clock in the morning. "I will send one or two staff officers over to-night to stay with Burnside and impress him with the importance of a prompt and vigorous attack. Warren and Wright should hold their corps as close to the enemy as possible, to take advantage of any diversion caused by this attack, and to push in if any opportunity presents itself."

Hancock was accordingly ordered to take position between the left of the Sixth corps and the right of Burnside. Mott was already on the ground, and soon after dark, Hancock moved the remainder of his command, Birney and Barlow in the advance. The road was narrow and rough, and led through a forest; there were no fences, and the guides sometimes mistook their way; the rain fell heavily and incessantly, and the men were weary with the week's fighting and marching; but they plodded on through the mire and the storm, and by midnight the head of the column had arrived at the Brown house, on the left of Mott, where it was proposed to form the troops for the assault. They went into position at once, in rear of the picket line, and about twelve hundred yards from the rebel entrenchments.

The ground ascended sharply towards the enemy, and was for the most part thickly wooded; but immediately in front of the point of attack, a clearing several hundred yards in width extended up to the breastworks. The salient projected three or four hundred yards beyond the general line of entrenchments, and was shaped exactly like the letter V, Hancock being opposite the apex. So little, however, was known of the enemy's position, that the direction in which the troops were to advance was determined by the compass, a line being drawn on the map, from the Brown house to a large white house inside the works, and near the point which it was desired to strike.

Barlow's division, in two lines of masses, was placed on the cleared ground, each regiment forming double columns on the centre. Birney was formed in two deployed lines on Barlow's right; in front of him was a marsh, and a dense wood of low pines. Mott's position was in rear of Birney, and Gibbon was held in reserve. It was daylight before these dispositions were completed, and then a heavy fog delayed still longer the assault; but at 4.35 A.M., the order was given to advance.

Barlow's heavy column marched straight over the enemy's picket without firing a shot, regardless of a sharp volley on the left, from a rebel detachment posted on high ground. Birney had some difficulty in making his way through the marsh and the wood in his front, but he pushed vigorously forward, overcoming all obstacles, and keeping well up with Barlow. The two divisions moved at quick time directly up the slope for several hundred yards, but when about half way to the summit, the men broke



into a tremendous cheer, and taking the double-quick step without orders, rolled like an irresistible wave over the entrenchments, tearing away the abatis with their hands, and carrying the line at all points, though it was desperately defended. Barlow and Birney entered at almost the same moment, and a fierce and bloody fight ensued inside the works, with bayonets and clubbed muskets, for the combatants were too close for firing. The struggle was short, however, and resulted in the capture of nearly four thousand prisoners of Ewell's corps, twenty pieces of artillery, with horses, caissons, and material complete, several thousand stand of small arms, and upwards of thirty colors. Among the prisoners were Major-General Edward Johnson, commanding a division, and Brigadier-General Stewart. The remaining rebels fled in great confusion, and the national troops rushed after them through the forest, in the direction of Spottsylvania, until they came upon a second line of works, about half a mile beyond, the existence of which had not before been known.

Burnside had moved a little earlier than Hancock, Potter's division having the advance, supported by Crittenden, while Wilcox was in reserve. The enemy's fire was drawn at half-past four, and by five the engagement was severe. The woods in Burnside's front were as dense as on the opposite face of the salient, but opportunities for the use of artillery nevertheless existed. Potter's division succeeded in carrying a portion of the rebel line, but was driven out again with loss on both sides.

Grant's head-quarters were in a thickly wooded dell, from which it was impossible to distinguish any

portion of the field, but the necessity of remaining at a point where he could be readily reached by every corps commander left him no option. It was a strange sight, in that early morning :—the general-in-chief, with a few officers, standing beside a fire that was almost quenched by the driving rain; within sound of the musketry, receiving reports, issuing orders, directing the battle, but unable to perceive any of its movements—shut in entirely by the trees. The first firing was heard at 4.20 A.M., doubtless from Burnside's artillery. Then there was an anxious interval, after which cheers and cries arose in the distance, mingled with the din of musketry, and muffled by the woods and the pattering rain; and at 5.30, an officer rode up hurriedly under the trees with Hancock's first report. He had carried the first line of works. Instantly after, a second aide brought news of many prisoners. Then came word from Burnside, that he also was engaged. At 5.45, Hancock reported the capture of three generals, and the Sixth corps was at once ordered to assault on his right. At the same time, Grant sent the good news to Burnside, and urged him to "push in with all possible vigor." At 5.50, two thousand prisoners were reported. At 6.15, Burnside announced having followed the enemy in his front two and a half miles. Three minutes later, he reported having made connection with the Second corps; this was on the left face of the salient. Hancock from the other face now sent for reinforcements, "for fear of accident;" but Grant had foreseen the emergency, and the Sixth corps had already been ordered to his support. At half-past six, the rebel General Johnson was brought in, a prisoner, to Grant's head-quarters. He had

been an old army friend of Grant and Meade in other days, and the three shook hands.\* While he stood talking with his captors, another report came in from Hancock: "I have finished up Johnson, and am now going into Early." And still another: he had taken three thousand prisoners and turned the enemy's guns on themselves; an entire division was in his hands, including the famous Stonewall brigade. Burnside next reported his three divisions vigorously engaged; and Grant replied: "Push your troops so as to keep up the connection with Hancock." Next, Hancock reported fifteen guns captured and four thousand prisoners; and still later, thirty or forty guns. His men, however, were disorganized, and he was getting them into line. Burnside now sent word that he had lost his connection with Hancock, and Grant hastily pencilled in reply: "Push the enemy, that's the best way to connect."

The formations of the Second corps had been very much broken in the assault and subsequent pursuit, and every effort was made by the officers to collect their men and re-form the scattered lines. The reserves of the corps were also promptly ordered up and directed to occupy the captured works. But Lee was fully alive to the critical nature of the situation. The absolute capture of so large a portion of his works and so many thousand of his troops was the most dangerous event of the

\* When General Stewart was taken to Hancock, after his capture, the latter, who had known his prisoner of old, extended his hand; but Stewart drew back, exclaiming: "Under the circumstances, I must decline to give my hand." Hancock at once replied: "*Under any other circumstances*, General Stewart, I should not have offered mine."



campaign ; his centre was pierced, his army cut in two, his wings were divided ; unless the disaster was at once repaired, not ordinary defeat, but absolute ruin was inevitable. He instantly made every effort to recover the position. Heavy reinforcements were thrown into the second line, opposite the captured point ; two divisions from the right, those of Wilcox and Mahone,\* were ordered to the centre, and thus strengthened, the rebels advanced upon the Second corps, before the disorder of its success was past. The troops resisted valiantly, but the enemy was desperate, and drove them back, step by step, to the line they had carried at daybreak. There, however, Hancock formed on the right and left of the salient, and turned the works against the men who had constructed them. The enemy made tremendous efforts to dislodge him, but in vain ; his heroes seemed inspired by the sight of the works they had won ; and at six o'clock, Wright came upon the field. He was at once directed to occupy the captured works on the right of the salient, and his men were hardly in position, when the rebels renewed their attack with greater vehemence than ever, pushing towards that portion of the line now held by Wright, which they appeared determined to regain. Mott's division, which formed the right of Hancock, joined the Sixth corps at the salient, Birney holding the captured entrenchments on Mott's left ; Gibbon was on the left of Birney, and Barlow on the extreme left of the line. Hancock's artillery was brought up and placed on high ground behind the works, and thence played over the heads of his own command, and into the enemy's ranks. The rebels,

\* Early, page 25.

however, advanced in very heavy force, assaulting again and again, and the national troops fought till on portions of the line they were out of ammunition, when they were relieved by others, who in their turn held out till they too had emptied their cartridge-boxes. But the works were not re-carried.

Warren had been ordered to attack before eight o'clock, in order to relieve the troops so hard pressed at the centre, but his dispositions seemed slow, and the instructions were repeated again and again, in the most peremptory manner.\* Both Grant and Meade were greatly chagrined at this delay, for it was losing all the advantages that Hancock's brilliant achievement had obtained; and finally at 10.40 A.M., Grant directed Meade in writing: "If Warren fails to attack promptly, send Humphreys to command his corps, and relieve him."†

The general-in-chief had also been disappointed with the result of Burnside's operations, and sharp despatches were sent to that commander, officer after officer conveying the urgent messages;‡ but Burnside

\* "The order of the major-general commanding is peremptory, that you attack at once, and at all hazards, with your whole force, if necessary."—*Humphreys to Warren, May 12, 9.15 A.M.*

"Hancock and Wright both report that they are hard pressed. The commanding general considers that the enemy cannot be very strong in your front."—*Humphreys to Warren, 9.30 A.M.*

† General Meade said to me at the time that he would have taken the responsibility of relieving Warren without orders, if the delay had been continued.

‡ "Push on with all possible vigor."—*Grant to Burnside, 6 A.M.*

"Push your troops so as to keep up the connection with Hancock."—*Grant to Burnside, 7.10 A.M.*

"Push the enemy with all your might. That's the way to connect."—*Grant to Burnside, 8 A.M.*

was still slow, and at last he was ordered either to advance at once or to send his troops to Hancock. This extreme anxiety to hasten the attacks on the right and left, was of course induced by Grant's desire to relieve Hancock and Wright, on whom Lee was now concentrating every man he could spare. The assault of the Second corps had been converted into a defence, while if Warren had only threatened vigorously, the enemy would have been unable to mass so heavily at the centre. As, however, the concentration had occurred, the rebel flanks were doubtless weakened, so that the Fifth and Ninth corps had a comparatively easy task. No man, besides, knew better than Grant, or more keenly appreciated the immense importance in battle, of time. The magnificent excitement of a charge, which inspires common men with the strength and the spirit of demi-gods, lasts not so long as the exhilaration of wine, and the after exhaustion comes more speedily. The very impetuosity which creates success is transformed in a moment into the turbulence by which success is destroyed; so that what is indispensable to victory is itself often the cause of defeat. The same passionate force which carries the troops over obstacles and enemies, carries them also beyond the control of officers and discipline, and unless the very instant is seized, the opportunity vanishes. The enemy recovers from the craze of terror sooner perhaps than the victors from the frenzy of pursuit, or he finds

"Tell Burnside to push hard with everything he can bring into the fight. If his provisional brigade is not in, bring that up."—*Grant to Lieut.-Col. Comstock, of his staff, 10 A.M.*

"Move one division of your troops to the right, to the assistance of Hancock, and push the balance as vigorously as possible."—*Grant to Burnside, 10.20 A.M.*



works or cover behind which to shelter himself and to breathe; and if his reinforcements come up then, the triumphant but disordered host is pressed back all unstrung, and all the more accessible to attack because a few moments before it was irresistible.

The opposition to Burnside was, however, more considerable than Grant at the time supposed.\* The ground in his front was full of rugged ravines, and covered with low thick pines, which concealed the enemy and at the same time impeded his own advance. Nevertheless, the Ninth corps did gain ground. Suddenly, however, Burnside came upon a strong point in the rebel works, protected by a pine thicket in front, and defended by a large force from Early's command. A heavy fire of musketry and artillery opened, before which the national troops were driven back with severe loss. But notwithstanding this reverse, Burnside succeeded in detaining a numerous enemy in his front all the afternoon, and although he accomplished no more positive result, he doubtless thus assisted Hancock to hold his own at the centre of the line.

During the day, Grant was at various points on the field, everywhere cheered by the troops when they recognized their leader on the little black pony which he often rode. Winding among the long processions of the wounded and by the park of captured cannon, Hancock's trophies, the general came at last upon an eminence from which he could descry a portion of the shifting lines. Here, almost between the armies, within range of the hostile guns, in sight of the battle, with reinforcements hurrying to the front, and prisoners and wounded streaming to

\* Early, page 25.

the rear, in an unpretending farm house, Grant found a loyal woman, living all alone. It was years since she had seen her country's flag, or one who revered it. Her husband and her sons were in the Northern armies, she knew not where, and she herself was an object of suspicion and detestation to her neighbors. The poor creature was almost frantic with joy. This apparition of a Union army, this battle under her windows, this presence of the chief she believed in, but had never seen—she said herself, it was like opening the gates of Hell. Deliverance was at hand. She was famished for food, and fuel, and for news. Her physical wants were supplied, and Grant undertook to procure her intelligence of her family.

At last, on the right of the line, Warren was spurred to an attack, by which, however, he accomplished nothing. After this first failure he made three other feeble attempts to assault, but, predicting unsuccess, was unsuccessful,\* on one occasion retiring before artillery alone. Finally, as there seemed no chance of acquiring any advantage in this quarter of the field, Grant determined to break up the Fifth corps for the day; Cutler's division was sent to Wright, and Griffin's to Hancock, under whom they did good service. The remainder of the corps was then moved closer to the left, and the entire line shortened, while the right of Warren, which was now the right of the army, was refused. The enemy made no attempt in any way to take advantage of this conspicuous change in the national dispositions,

\* "The major-general commanding infers from the tenor of your despatches that in your judgment your attack will not be successful."—*Humphreys to Warren*, 10.5 A.M.

and the general-in-chief was confirmed in his belief that there had been no important force in front of Warren, and that a vigorous assault on the rebel left would have been successful earlier in the day. Warren's after movements were made under verbal orders from Humphreys, the chief of staff of the army of the Potomac, who was directed to remain with the command, and in Meade's name superintend its operations.\*

The battle, however, still hinged upon the point where Hancock had broken the rebel line in the morning. All day the enemy continued his efforts to recapture what he had lost, constantly pushing forward troops for that purpose from the right and left, while Grant, as has been seen, also concentrated upon the salient. During the afternoon, a heavy column of assault was organized by Meade, in rear of Wright's position, but the men were found to be so much exhausted, that it was deemed expedient to abandon the design. No fewer than five separate assaults, however, were made by Lee. The opposite flags were often thrust within a few yards of each other, and the fire was so concentrated that a tree eighteen inches in diameter was cut down by bullets. The whole forest was blighted where the rain of shot

\* "Please remain here, and in my name attend to the shortening of the line and the sending reinforcements to Wright and Hancock."—*Meade to Humphreys, 10.33 A.M.*

"The after movements of the Fifth corps were made under verbal orders issued by me."—*Note to the above, by General Humphreys.*

"Warren alone has gained nothing. His attacks were made in the forenoon with so much delay, that both Grant and Meade were greatly dissatisfied; but when they were made they were unsuccessful, though attended with considerable loss."—*Dana, May 12.*



had fallen, and the ground was hidden by corpses, lying in heaps, three and four on each other.\* But though the battle raged almost without cessation, from the right of the Sixth corps to the left of Barlow, while Burnside's flank attack on the extreme left was renewed again and again, until his ammunition was exhausted, no change in their relative positions was achieved by either army, after Hancock's first success in the morning. It was midnight before the rebels desisted from their attacks, and a cold and drenching rain was falling as they withdrew to their inner line. The troops had been under musketry fire for twenty hours.

The losses in this battle were frightful on both sides, and probably equal.† Lee's frantic efforts to recover the salient must have cost him dear, while nearly four thousand prisoners and twenty cannon remained in the hands of Grant, together with the ground which had been the object of this fierce contest. Still, it was only a moral success that had been attained. The national troops had carried, and still held the rebel line, but a new one was formed again in their front, as strong as ever. No absolute tactical result was achieved by the exploit of the Second corps.

Hancock had indeed dealt the severest blow of

\* This is no rhetorical exaggeration, but a simple statement of what no man can forget, who saw that ghastly spectacle on the 12th or 13th of May.

† The question of the losses on both sides during this campaign will be fully discussed hereafter. No full returns of either army are in existence for any particular day: none were made either to or by Grant, and probably none to or by Lee. The telegram reporting the battle, which Lee forwarded to Davis, is given in the Appendix.

the campaign, but, as happened in the Wilderness, under the same commander, after a brilliant and successful onset, his troops became disorganized by victory, and he seemed unable to follow up his advantage, or even to retain all that he had gained, until fresh supports arrived. He could inspire, but apparently not control his soldiers. In the Wilderness, all the splendid results of his success on the 6th of May, were lost by this same incapacity; at Spottsylvania, he was obliged to fall back to the works he had won, though there he held the rebels off with magnificent determination. Wright was ordered up with promptness after the earliest definite news of the victory, and arrived on the ground in fifteen minutes, but it was then too late to act offensively. The advance, the assault, the capture of the entrenchments, the fight inside, the pursuit, the attack upon the second line, the repulse, the falling back, had all occurred, and Hancock was already using as defences the works he had wrested from the enemy. Had he been able to hold his own a little longer, he and Wright together might have followed up the success, and the ruin of Lee's army would have been consummated at Spottsylvania. But there are hundreds of men who can lead a charge, for one who can control his soldiers or his own faculties in the hurly-burly afterwards. One achievement requires physical courage and personal magnetism; the other, mental and moral power.

It was, however, Warren's feebleness which especially prevented Grant from following up the advantage that Hancock had obtained; and the trait which afterwards occasioned Warren's downfall on the field of battle, was in this emergency at least equally

conspicuous, and still more inopportune. An excess of caution, a delay in assuming the offensive, even when ordered, an indisposition to take tactical risks, an unwillingness to trust that his superiors would protect, or perhaps knew how to protect his advance, or his equals support it, destroyed the effect of otherwise brilliant talents, and marred his reputation as a soldier; besides rendering the combinations of his chief and the magnificent fighting qualities of his corps of less avail, at critical moments, than either the lieutenant-general, or the soldiers themselves, had a right to anticipate. Warren's gallantry and patriotism were beyond all question; his abilities were marked, and his subordination was undoubted; and yet all were wasted by this one quality of intellectual, or rather moral feebleness. He could not put doubts out of his mind, and concentrate all his energies into a moment of action, leaving to others, above and below him, the responsibilities that belonged to them. While he was cautiously manœuvring, the critical moment passed. He developed his line when he should have assaulted, and skirmished and felt the enemy till the enemy either escaped or fortified in his presence; and when he was quite ready, there was often no occasion for readiness. Once engaged, he handled his troops admirably; then, he was obliged to consider his own command and the enemy, and nobody and nothing else; then, his really fine faculties came into play: his eye was clear, his bearing magnetic and impetuous, his judgment rapid and sound; he led his troops in person to the most dangerous points, and often dealt blows that told severely. He was much loved by his officers and his men, and if it had been his nature to be content with seeing



and doing exactly his own duty and nothing more, he would have succeeded ; but he saw also all the possible blunders of everybody else, and all their possible effects on himself and his command ; and while his vision was thus blurred, the opportunity eluded his grasp. Some have supposed that at the head of an army he might have done better than commanding a corps, because then it would have been his duty to consider and supervise everything. There certainly are men whose ability is hampered by subordination, but rises into genius when they are supreme.

Grant's report of the 12th of May was in these words : "The eighth day of the battle closes, leaving between three and four thousand prisoners in our hands for the day's work, including two general officers and over thirty pieces of artillery. The enemy are obstinate, and seem to have found their last ditch. We have lost no organization, not even that of a company, whilst we have destroyed and captured one division (Johnson's), one brigade (Dole's), and one regiment entire of the enemy."\*

The day after the battle, Grant nominated

\* During the war the rebels never made so important and successful an assault as that of Hancock on the 12th of May. Indeed, they rarely attempted to assault fortified works, and never captured one when Grant was in the field. On the other hand, the national troops constantly attacked, and often carried, earthworks of enormous strength. At Donelson, Black river bridge, Champion's hill, and Chattanooga, Grant took and held important fortified positions, and later in the war he did the same ; but there is no parallel to these achievements on the rebel side. Their great victory at Fredericksburg was purely defensive ; at Chancellorsville, no important works were carried ; and at Gettysburg, when they came out and attacked strong field-works, their repulse was disastrous.

Wright, Gibbon, and Humphreys, major-generals of volunteers, and Carroll\* and Upton, brigadiers.† Hancock he named for the grade of brigadier-general in the regular army. The letter in which these recommendations were made, contained also these words: "General Meade has more than met my most sanguine expectations. He and Sherman are the fittest officers for large commands I have come in contact with. If their services can be rewarded by promotion to the rank of major-general in the regular army, the honor would be worthily bestowed, and I would feel personally gratified. I would not like to see one of these promotions at this time without seeing the other." In this estimate of Meade's ability Grant never wavered, although soldiers and civilians of importance often sought to change his mind.

To some indeed of Grant's well-wishers, one thing seemed evident, after this week of battle, and that was the impolicy of retaining an officer in the position of Meade, who could not, it was thought, exert a legitimate influence over his own subordinates with a superior immediately present,

\* Colonel Carroll, of the Second corps, had displayed both skill and gallantry. He was badly wounded at the battle of the Wilderness, but insisted on remaining with his command through all the fighting of the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th of May. On the 10th, he was brought up bandaged, and presented to the general-in-chief, between the assaults, and then went back to his brigade. On the 13th, he was struck again, while on the skirmish line, and carried from the field, but not until his promotion had been earned.

† At the same time, Grant nominated Dodge, in Sherman's army, for a major-general, and McCandlish, a colonel in the Fifth corps, to be brigadier-general of volunteers. He also wrote to Burnside: "Have you a colonel that ought to be promoted?" but I can find no record of Burnside's answer.

known to be directing all his movements; while Grant's personal traits lost half their force, obscured by an intermediary. But, an army to be well led, must reflect, or rather share the characteristics of its chief; the highest officers, as well as the rank and file, should be inspired with his confidence or determination, should display his promptness or persistency, his audacity and contempt for danger: they must respond almost instinctively to his will. If Grant could communicate direct with his corps commanders, it was believed that he might convey or infuse something of his own spirit and character, but the result of having a middleman was to make the whole organization wooden. Meade severed the nerve between the general-in-chief and the army. He was a non-conductor.

Grant, however, under-rated, or rather never rated at all, his own personal influence. He was not introspective. He never studied himself, nor criticized his own traits. He was not conscious of his own directness; he did not appreciate his own earnestness, nor the way in which it told on others. He himself did everything simply and naturally; his words and bearing were never meant to produce effect, and he did not dream of the effect they often did produce. Yet he always wrote his own orders for battle, and with rare exceptions, his orders in battle: he wanted no intermediary then; no staff-officer could utter his thought so clearly as he could himself: but having sent his orders to Meade, they percolated through two or three brains, before they reached a corps commander.\*

\* The order of Grant to Meade for the 12th of May, after directing Hancock's assault, continues in these words: "Warren and Wright



It does not need to suppose that Meade was lacking either in ability or earnestness, to see that he might be an impediment. He certainly had succeeded when he had been more untrammelled, and his magnanimous loyalty has been already shown; but, if his energies ever flagged when Grant's were fresh, if he failed to appreciate in any particular the designs of his chief, if the two were not on every occasion in perfect intellectual accord, there was one chance more of failure. The commanders, it is true,

should hold their corps as close to the enemy as possible, to take advantage of any diversion caused by this attack, and to push in if any opportunity presents itself." Grant's idea on this point was very definite, for in his despatch to Burnside on the same day, he said: "Generals Warren and Wright will hold their corps as close to the enemy as possible, to take advantage of any diversion caused by your and Hancock's attack, and will push in their whole force, if any opportunity presents itself."

But this direction, after filtering through Meade, found utterance in the following order to Warren: "The Second corps will be withdrawn to-night from its position, which you will hold with your corps, in addition to the position now held by you. You will shorten your line, whenever, in your judgment, upon a consideration of all the circumstances, it would be admissible. *To aid in meeting an attack of the enemy, or his advance upon our right,* General Wright, commanding Sixth corps, will post at Alsop's, in the vicinity of your present head-quarters, a division of his corps under the command of General Russell, that will be held ready to move wherever required," etc. Now, it is quite possible that if, instead of these instructions to be ready to aid in meeting an attack, and to hold the position which Hancock had previously occupied, Warren had received direct orders from the general-in-chief, to "hold his corps as close to the enemy as possible, to take advantage of any diversion caused by the attack, and to '*push in*' if any opportunity offered," he might have pushed in on the 12th of May, with very different results from those which were attained. Certainly, the two despatches convey very different ideas. Meade's order to Warren is given without abridgment in the Appendix.

were on the pleasantest of terms. During the entire campaign, their head-quarters were always pitched within a few rods of each other; they sat by the same camp fire at night, they rode together at the head of their staffs, they halted at the same spot, and often received the reports of subordinates at the same moment.\* Sometimes Grant gave his orders only verbally to Meade, and very often Meade submitted his written ones, in order to be certain that they conveyed the exact ideas of Grant. Besides this, in an emergency, Grant always disregarded etiquette, and issued orders direct to whichever officer it was necessary to address; so that the possibilities of mistake were rare. But they were possibilities: two men never can be one; and many things one man can do better than two; and one of these things certainly is—utter his own thought.

Yet more: as the commander of an army, Meade was necessarily left to handle the troops in detail. Grant generally told him to send a corps or a division to such a point for such an object; but Meade selected sometimes the corps, and almost always the division. He also was responsible for the promptness of the movement, for the choice of roads, and for all the multitude of minor circumstances in which one man's knowledge of men and power over events differ so widely from another's.† There were

\* I often saw General Meade, before reading a despatch to himself from a corps commander, hand it to General Grant.

† "Commanding all the armies as I did, I tried, as far as possible, to leave General Meade in independent command of the army of the Potomac. My instructions for that army were general in their nature, leaving all the details and the execution to him."—*Grant's Official Report.*

those, indeed, who thought that Warren's assault, and even Wright's, on the 12th of May, would have been better timed, had the orders gone direct from Grant; and that Warren and Sedgwick on the 8th, and Wright and Mott on the 10th, would all have been brought up more promptly, but for this intervention. Whether it was the natural result of the arrangement, the greater consumption of time unavoidable, sometimes at critical moments; or the abatement suffered by any force when communicated through so many mediums; or whether it was an inferior ardor, or energy, or ability in Meade; or all these causes combined,—the fact remained, that in a number of instances, assaults had been successfully made, and the supports which had been previously ordered did not arrive in time. The anterior strategy was good, the spirit of the men all that could be desired; but when it came to the tactical handling of divisions, there was a lack either of promptness or precision; a want of clearness of comprehension, or of rapidity of execution, by reason of which, much that might have been attained was lost.

These ideas were pressed upon Grant by a few, to whom he allowed a sufficient degree of intimacy, some of whom were besides convinced that Meade lacked many of the qualities essential in a great commander. The general-in-chief, however, always defended his subordinate, and believed, as he said when the war was over, that Meade was the right man in the right place.\* He declared that by leaving the administration of the army to another, he was himself freer

\* Grant's Official Report.



from petty cares, and better able to direct the great strategy in which, not only the army of the Potomac, but the commands of the West and South were included. Meade, indeed, was to him like the chief of staff of a European army, relieving the general of all detail, and ready in an emergency to supply his place in the field.\*

But more than all, Grant had political reasons for his course, political in the highest sense of the word ; reasons based on the peculiarities of human nature, as well as on purely military considerations. He believed that the removal of Meade would have a direct unfortunate influence on the army, more than counterbalancing any good which it might secure. There undoubtedly existed in the army of the Potomac a dissatisfaction, half expressed, perhaps only half formed, that a Western man should have been brought to command it, who had not shared its earlier cam-

\* General Rawlins, the nominal chief of staff of the general-in-chief, never commanded troops, and gained all his military knowledge and experience as a staff officer taken from civil life. He was a man of undoubted ability, of instinctive sympathy with popular feeling, whether in the army or out of it, and of prodigious energy in manner and language. He was passionately patriotic, and would have died for Grant. His intellect, however, was entirely undisciplined, and his genius was quick, rather than original, or profound. He could seize the ideas of his chief, and present them so forcibly, that bystanders often thought they were his own ; but it would be a great mistake to imagine that he was entitled to the credit of Grant's conceptions, some of the most successful of which he earnestly opposed. It did not take Grant and Rawlins to make Grant, as some have said, who knew neither intimately. Rawlins himself would have been the first to repel the pretension. He was simply an earnest, able man, who devoted himself absolutely to serving his country, and for him this was synonymous with serving Grant.

paigns and difficulties and dangers. If that Western man should now remove the commander who had already led it to decided victory, a greater soreness still might be occasioned ; its spirit might be galled, its working become less harmonious. Grant's military ability was always based upon his knowledge of human nature ; he selected his generals for their personal characteristics as well as for their professional qualities or acquirements, and he looked upon an army not as a machine, but as a mass of human beings, with prejudices and partialities and passions, like us all. He was also most unwilling to excite anything approaching to sectional feeling. So, while asserting always the military ability and loyalty of Meade, he believed besides, that even if some evils were created by his retention, others still more alarming were certain to arise, in case he was removed. In this view he persisted, and with this view Meade was retained, and Grant stood by him unwaveringly.

Even after the terrible fighting of the 12th of May, there was no rest for the weary soldiers. At nine o'clock in the evening, Grant ordered Burnside : "Have the men woke up and under arms by half-past three ;" and these were the troops that had been fighting since dawn of the day before. But there were indications that the enemy was moving, and it was important to ascertain the fact. Meade also was ordered to "push, to see what they were doing." A large force was accordingly advanced along the whole front, by which it was ascertained that the rebels were merely strengthening the inner line to which they had been driven by the Second corps. The remainder of the day was devoted to

burying the dead, securing the trophies, and bringing in the wounded from the temporary hospitals, or often from hollows by the roadside, where they lay, sheltered in some degree from the incessant fire.

This day, Mott's division was, at Hancock's request, reduced to a brigade, and consolidated with Birney's command.\*

On the 13th, Grant ordered Meade to withdraw Wright and Warren after dark from their position on the right of Hancock, and move them to the left of Burnside. The two corps were to attack as soon as they were in line, and Burnside also was directed to take advantage of any opportunity to assault. This movement, if successful, would threaten not only the right flank of Lee, but the roads leading south, which had become uncovered during the operations of the day before. The rain was falling heavily when the troops began their march, and the mire was several feet deep, but trees were felled and laid across the swamp, to form a road. The fogs were thick, and fires were lighted to show the way, but they were hidden by the mist or quenched by the rain; the Ny had to be forded, for there were no bridges, and the river was swollen by the storm. At daylight, when the head of the column reached the point intended, the rain had increased to a tempest, and the ground was in such condition that any further advance was impracticable. Warren took position on the left of Burnside, and the Sixth corps had the extreme left of the line. In estab-

\* "General Mott applied verbally to General Hancock to be relieved, but General Meade gave him notice that if a formal application should be made, he would recommend that General Mott should be mustered out of service."—*Dana*, May 16.



lishing his new position, Wright was obliged to seize a hill that seemed important, in his front; he sent Upton forward, and the height was promptly carried, but soon afterwards Upton was driven back. Warren, however, ordered a brigade under Ayres to his support, and the point was re-taken, and made secure.\* This was the only fighting that occurred. The national army had by this time completely shifted its position; its original line, north of Spottsylvania, had been semi-circular, while that which it now occupied ran north and south, and was directly east of the court-house.

During the night of the 14th, the rebels were moving troops from their left to meet this accession of national strength against Lee's right. The lines in front of Hancock were thus left vacant; and Grant accordingly withdrew the Second corps, massing it behind the national centre, so that it could be moved either to the right or left as emergencies might require; Birney's division, however, was still allowed to remain on the right of Burnside. This day, Grant wrote to Meade: "Burnside just now informs me, that the enemy are moving on his right in considerable force, but he does not know yet in what force or for what object. If they move on him, the best possible relief will be to move the whole army of the Potomac forward, from Wright and Warren's front." It has already been seen that Grant's usual method of relieving a threatened point was to make a counter-assault elsewhere—a fashion as old as the days of Hannibal, when the war was carried into Africa.

\* "I thank you and Ayres for taking the hill. It was handsomely done."—*Meade to Warren, May 14, 7.15 P.M.*

On the 15th of May, word came that Averill had cut the East Tennessee railroad at New river, and destroyed a depôt of supplies at Dublin, in West Virginia; also that Butler had advanced from Bermuda Hundred, and carried a line of works near Drury's Bluff, the most important outpost of Richmond, on the James. Grant had already enjoined on him to cut the Richmond and Danville railroad,\* at this time the only remaining avenue of supply to the rebel capital. Averill and Crook on the west, Butler on the south and east, Meade on the north—all were converging.

On the 16th, good news arrived from Sherman: Johnston had been forced to evacuate Dalton, and the national troops were pressing in pursuit; while from Sheridan the reports were better still. He had destroyed both the Virginia Central and the Fredericksburg railroads, for miles, in the rear of Lee; had fought and utterly defeated the rebel cavalry, killing Stuart, their greatest leader; and afterwards even carried the outer lines of Richmond.† It must have been a dismal week in the rebel capital. Butler was assaulting Drury's Bluff, only seven miles below the city; Sheridan's troopers were inside the fortifications on the north; Sherman had forced back the Western army; Crook had cut the railroad to Tennessee, and Grant had pierced

\* "Please telegraph General Butler to have the Richmond and Danville road cut if possible."—*Grant to Halleck, May 13.*

† "It is possible that I might have captured the city of Richmond by an assault, but the want of knowledge of your operations and those of General Butler, and the facility with which the enemy could throw in troops, made me abandon the attempt."—*Sheridan to Meade, May 13.*

All the rebel accounts corroborate the statement that Sheridan could have entered Richmond on the 11th of May.

Lee's centre at Spottsylvania. As one after another, the terrible reports came in, the combination and concentration which later critics have sometimes been unable to discern, were doubtless apparent to Jefferson Davis and his generals.

Their confusion was heightened by rivalries and wrangling among themselves. Beauregard and his government were on bad terms, and while the guns of Butler and Sheridan could be heard in the streets of Richmond, the commander who had come from the Carolinas to rescue the city was exchanging recriminations with his superiors.\* Meanwhile news arrived that the Danville road was cut, and one of the diaries of the day declares: "All communication with the country from which provisions are derived is now at an end. Colonel Northrup† told me to-day that unless the railroads were retaken and repaired, he could not feed the troops ten days longer." Stuart was brought in wounded and to die: Mr. Jefferson Davis visited his couch, but could afford no solace to the suffering hero. Preparations were made for the flight of the rebel President. Members of Congress hung about the door of the War Department, anxious for news, but the wires

\* "Your two telegrams of this date are received. They pain and surprise. I do not feel this to be an appropriate time to reply fully to them. I may do that hereafter. At present I have only to say that while your past services, patriotism, and reputation are fully appreciated, you are on those accounts only the more relied on, and expected to use every effort in your power with all your force to carry out the instructions of the Department, and accomplish the junction of all our forces to fight the enemy or defend the capital."—*Seddon, rebel Secretary of War, to Beauregard, May 11.*

† The rebel commissary-general of subsistence.



were cut in all directions, and the only intelligence came by couriers. There were rumors of defeat, and of treason in high quarters. There were rumors of victory, invented to give confidence, and repeated with eagerness, but disproved before they were believed.\*

On the 16th, Grant wrote to Halleck : "The roads have now become so impassable that ambulances with wounded men can no longer run between here and Fredericksburg. All offensive operations must necessarily cease till we can have twenty-four hours of dry weather. The army is in the best of spirits, and feels the greatest confidence in ultimate success. The promptness with which you have forwarded reinforcements will contribute greatly to diminishing our mortality list and ensuring a complete victory. You can assure the President and the Secretary of War that the elements alone have suspended hostilities, and that it is in no manner due to weakness or exhaustion on our part." Up to this time, the reinforcements which Grant had received amounted to six thousand men.†

\* "Rebel War Clerk's Diary," Vol. II., pp. 207-8.

† "General Tyler arrived at 2.30 P.M., to assume command of all troops ordered to the front. . . . Troops sent forward, six thousand."—*General Abercrombie, commanding at Belle Plain, Fredericksburg, etc., to Secretary Stanton, May 15.*

"About six thousand troops have been forwarded to General Grant from this point."—*Colonel Hoffman, Commissary-General of Prisoners, to Stanton, Belle Plain, May 15.*

"Warner's regiment of heavy artillery, the first of your reinforcements, arrived here at 7.30 P.M. yesterday."—*Dana to Stanton, May 15.*

"I have the honor to report that Brigadier-General R. V. Tyler has arrived at his post, and has taken command of the following troops . . . in all about six thousand seven hundred men.

On the 17th, conditional orders were issued for a movement still further to the left, with a view of attacking and turning the right of the rebel army. The Sixth corps, massed on the left of Warren, was to push forward as close to the enemy as possible, and Hancock following, to assault at four o'clock in the morning. Burnside was to be massed in rear of Hancock, so that immediate advantage could be taken, if any success occurred. The country in front of Wright, however, was found to be an impracticable chapparal, and the movement to the left was abandoned. Hancock and Wright were ordered instead to make a night march to the right, and attack at daybreak, in front of the lines they held at the close of the fighting on the 12th of May. It was the same battle-ground so terribly familiar to the Sixth and Second corps. Hancock again had the left, the Sixth corps was on the right, Burnside was to be in readiness to support, and Warren to enfilade with cannon fire. Before daylight, the troops were in the positions designated, the artillery of the Second corps being posted on the works won from the General Tyler will probably leave here with his command to join you to-morrow afternoon."—*Abercrombie to Adjutant-General Army of Potomac, May 16.*

"In addition to the troops from General Tyler mentioned in despatch of this morning . . . in all two thousand four hundred strong, have reported to General Tyler, and go on to the army to-morrow."—*Abercrombie to War Department, May 16, 8 P.M.*

"Besides the first regiment of Vermont artillery, the only new troops that have yet reported here are about eighteen hundred drafted men, recruits, and men discharged from hospitals."—*Dana, May 17, 7 P.M.*

These statements are important, because the reinforcements sent to General Grant in this campaign have been so constantly and extravagantly over-estimated.

rebels on the 12th, and firing directly over the heads of the assailants during the battle. The enemy held a strong line about half a mile in front, parallel with that which Hancock had stormed six days before. The position was concealed by the forest, and protected by heavy slashing. As the national forces advanced, they were met by a severe fire, both of musketry and artillery, which completely swept their front and made great havoc in the ranks. The troops pressed on, however, until they arrived at the edge of the abatis, but there the heavy fire and the difficulty of the obstacle arrested their progress. Several gallant attempts were made to penetrate further, but without success ; and finding that he was losing heavily, with but little chance of carrying the position, Hancock announced the fact, and was authorized to withdraw. At ten A.M., the attack was discontinued, and the two corps re-occupied the works opposite the Landron house.

This day it was Grant's turn to receive bad news. First of all came intelligence from Sigel, who had advanced fifty miles up the valley of the Shendandoah, but was entirely defeated at Newmarket, losing six hundred men out of six thousand, and retreating as far as Strasburg ; he left his wounded in the hands of the enemy. Grant was so far from expecting this disaster, that an hour or two before the intelligence arrived, he inquired of Halleck whether "Sigel could not go up the Shenandoah valley to Staunton? The enemy are evidently drawing supplies largely from that source, and if Sigel can destroy the road there, it will be of vast importance to us." But instead of advancing upon Staunton, Sigel was driven back to Cedar creek, and there was no hope



of his making a junction with either Crook or Averill. Grant at once directed Halleck to collect all the surplus force in Sigel's department, at Harper's Ferry, from which point it could be brought to the army of the Potomac, or sent up the Shenandoah valley, as might be thought desirable. He evidently meant to leave no force under Sigel that was not indispensable for defensive purposes.

Butler too reported that, after he had assaulted and carried the first line of the enemy's works at Drury's Bluff, the rebels attacked him with reinforcements which made their strength equal to his own, forcing him back in some confusion and with considerable loss; the enemy, however, was eventually repelled, and Butler retired at leisure within his own lines, holding, he said, the railroad between Petersburg and Richmond. This was indeed a gloomy result, that the two co-operating armies should both fail in their co-operation at the same juncture. Halleck announced the double disaster in one despatch: "Sigel is in full retreat on Strasburg. He will do nothing but run; never did anything else. . . . Butler is falling back. Don't rely on him." And this was at the moment when another assault on Lee had failed! Grant himself was making but a slow and painful advance; and now, not only had his two subordinates received rebuffs, but the forces which had opposed both Sigel and Butler would certainly be brought to strengthen Lee, and make the task of the lieutenant-general doubly difficult.

He, however, at once prepared to grapple with these new emergencies. And first of all, being weakened on every side, he naturally, for him, pre-

pared to move the army of the Potomac *forward*. On the 18th of May, immediately after the unsuccessful assault, he wrote to Meade: "Before daylight to-morrow morning, I propose to draw Hancock and Burnside from the position they now hold, and put Burnside to the left of Wright. Wright and Burnside should then force their way up as close to the enemy as they can get without a general engagement, or with a general engagement if the enemy will come out of their works to fight, and entrench. Hancock should march and take up a position as if in support of the two left corps. To-morrow night, at twelve or one o'clock, he will be moved south-east with all his force, and as much cavalry as can be given to him, to get as far towards Richmond on the line of the Fredericksburg railroad as he can make, fighting the enemy in whatever force he can find them. If the enemy make a general move to meet this, they will be followed by the other three corps of the army, and attacked, if possible, before time is given to entrench." This was the important point,—to attack the rebels before they had time to entrench, to meet them in the open field, to bring on a general engagement, *if they would come out of their works to fight*. Lee was, if possible, to be amused by a show of attack, (for Grant hardly hoped that he would fight outside of works) while Hancock moved on, again by the left flank, as far towards Richmond as possible; thus once more compelling by strategy what had not yet been accomplished by assault. Since the rebels remained inflexibly within their lines to await attack, knowing full well that entrenchments made their strength far more than equal to Grant's, he again determined

to compel them to leave those entrenchments, and at the same time he forced the contest still nearer Richmond, and brought the army of the Potomac closer to that on the James. This last object had become especially important, for the army of the James was now unable to act offensively against its own antagonist, and instead of obliging Lee to subtract from his force for the defence of Richmond, was releasing the defenders of Richmond to reinforce Lee.

But while thus again striking out to the left, Grant was not unmindful of the new and pressing exigencies, far away on the right. At once, after Sigel's defeat, he asked for that officer's removal; and when Hunter was suggested for his successor, he replied on the same day: "By all means, send General Hunter or any one else to the command of West Virginia." Halleck then inquired what instructions Hunter should receive, and Grant replied: "The enemy are evidently relying for supplies greatly on such as are brought over the branch road running through Staunton. . . . I think it would be better for General Hunter to move in that direction, and reach Staunton and Gordonsville, or Charlottesville, if he does not meet too much opposition. If he can hold a force at bay equal to his own, he will be doing good service." Sigel, it will be remembered, had been ordered to form a junction with Crook, as that officer came eastward; and of this Hunter was now reminded. The principal object of his campaign, however, was to detach largely from Lee, and destroy as many as possible of the stores from which Lee's army and Richmond were supplied.

Before the situation on the James became com-



pletely apparent, Grant had written to Halleck : " I fear there is some difficulty with the forces at City Point which prevents their effective use. The fault may be with the commander, and it may be with his subordinates. General Smith, whilst a very able officer, is obstinate, and is likely to condemn whatever is not suggested by himself. Either those forces should be so occupied as to detain a force nearly equal to their own, or the garrison in the entrenchments at City Point should be reduced to a minimum, and the remainder ordered here." It has been seen that Grant had also thought of bringing a portion of Sigel's command to the same focus, when he found that officer unable to handle troops ; it was, however, indispensable to maintain a considerable force on the line of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and in the valley of the Shenandoah, lest the rebels should sally, through this open portal, upon the unguarded North. The same reason, however, did not exist for detaining a large command in defence of Bermuda Hundred ; and after Butler's repulse, the first idea of Grant was to bring to the army of the Potomac the troops that had been rendered useless on the James.

At the same time with this discouraging news from Sigel and Butler, Grant received from various sources details of the disaster which had befallen Banks ; and on the 16th of May, he telegraphed to Halleck : " Private letters and official statements from the Department of the Gulf show such a state of affairs there as to demand, in my opinion, the immediate removal of General Banks. The army have undoubtedly lost confidence in him." But Banks had already been superseded, and a new com-

mand created, including Texas, Louisiana, and all the region beyond the Mississippi as far north as Arkansas. To this Major-General Canby had been assigned. All these important changes had been made without consulting Grant.\*

\* There is a mystery here which I am unable to explain. On the 2nd of May, Grant wrote to Halleck, from Culpeper : "Has anything definite been done in regard to officers west of the Mississippi?" Halleck replied (see page 84), that all of Grant's telegrams had been laid before the government, but that no definite decision had been announced. On the 4th, the army of the Potomac moved, Grant having said to Halleck the day before : "I will have to leave affairs West entirely to you." On the 7th, Canby was placed in command of the Department of West Mississippi ; and on the 16th, Grant was still in ignorance of the arrangement, as his letter of that date (given in full in the Appendix) shows.

When Grant, on the 2nd of May, suggested that Halleck should take command at the South-West, leaving Canby in his stead at Washington, the chief of staff objected on his own account (see page 84), and also said : "General Canby has been assisting me in getting recruits, furloughed men, and troops out of the Northern states. He has been sick, and his duties in the War Department have nearly broken him down. He says his business is greatly behind in the office." *Four days later*, Halleck wrote Canby's instructions. They will be found in the Appendix, and should be read in connection with that part of Chapter XV. which treats of the Red river campaign. The paragraph in which Canby was authorized to employ a part of Sherman's force west of the Mississippi, was in direct contravention of all Grant's views and orders, and a return to the mischievous policy which had brought about the disasters of Banks. The letter makes no mention of the general-in-chief, but, contrary to usage and etiquette, gives all instructions for purely military movements in the name of the President and the Secretary of War ; it throws blame on Banks, as Halleck had done before, for movements which the latter had himself suggested and encouraged ; it advises Canby, as of old, to a course which is yet not absolutely ordered ; and it was not made known to Grant until after the close of the war.

As soon as the general-in-chief determined to make another advance, he directed the artillery reserve, numbering over one hundred pieces, to be sent back to Washington. Grant was not inclined to over-estimate artillery. In sieges, and in preparing to deliver or receive assaults, he considered this arm, of course, of great importance, but always held that the amount of artillery should depend entirely upon the nature of the country and the character of the operations. In the wooded region where his present campaign was fought, the thickets were so close that artillerists were generally unable to aim by the eye, and obliged to direct their practice on purely scientific principles: battles, indeed, were often decided by actual hand-to-hand conflict, at too close quarters for the effectual use of cannon at all.\* On the 17th of May, accordingly, he informed Halleck: "I have ordered back to Belle Plain all the reserve artillery:" and in another despatch, on the same day, he said: "If Sheridan has not started back, he had better turn over all his weak artillery to Butler." He was evidently stripping still closer for the next fight, and meant to be encumbered by no weapons not likely to be used.

On the 19th, he announced to Halleck: "I shall make a flank movement early in the morning and try to reach Bowling Green and Milford station. If successful, Port Royal will be more convenient as

\* General Grant told me the day after he crossed the Rappahannock, and before he had experience of the wonderful Virginia jungle, that he should rely principally on infantry, and that there was a larger force of artillery brought with the army of the Potomac than he thought necessary.



a depôt than Fredericksburg. I wish you would stir up the navy, and see if they cannot reach there." The route from Washington to Port Royal was by the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers, which ran through territory mostly hostile, and required protection against partisan troops along the shore. This the navy afforded, by means of the light gunboats improvized during the war.

In the movement now contemplated, Burnside was to have the left of the new line, facing west, while Hancock was to separate entirely from the army, and "strike first" for Guinea station, on the Fredericksburg railroad. To Burnside, therefore, Grant said on the 19th: "Push pickets out to the Po river, if you can, and drive in the rebel pickets, until you find the end or right of the enemy's main line. You want to get, if possible, where their movements can be observed; and if they move away, we want to follow close upon them."

But on the afternoon of the 19th, Lee moved forward Ewell's whole corps against Grant's right flank, where Tyler was in position with a body of fresh troops from Fredericksburg, not having yet joined the Second corps, to which he had been assigned. That corps was massed in rear of Grant's centre, preparatory to moving south. Ewell crossed the Ny at five o'clock, and pushed on as far as the Fredericksburg road, while, in order to create a diversion in his favor, Early also advanced a portion of his command, and held the whole of his corps in readiness to co-operate, if Ewell should prove successful.\*

The assault was sudden and vigorous, but

\* Early's Memoir, page 27.

Grant at once ordered up the Second and Fifth corps to the support of Tyler, who held his own splendidly. His men had never been in battle before, but they fought like veterans, or as the veterans said, better than themselves. They did not seek cover as quickly as if they had been older soldiers, but rushed up to the enemy outside of works, and withstood him valiantly ; for a while it was one division against three. Hancock himself soon came upon the field, and found Tyler in the midst of a hot engagement. Birney's division was hurried forward, and thrown in on the right, and Warren moved Crawford rapidly up on Tyler's left. The two other divisions of the Second corps were in reserve.

Ferrero with his colored division was on the road to Fredericksburg, in rear and on the right of Tyler, and near the point where Ewell struck the national line. This road formed Grant's direct communication with his base, and he sent word at once to Ferrero : " The enemy have crossed the Ny on the right of our lines, in considerable force, and may possibly detach a force to move on Fredericksburg. Keep your cavalry pickets well out on the plank road, and all other roads leading west and south of you. If you find the enemy moving infantry and artillery towards you, report it promptly. In that case, take up strong positions and detain him all you can, turning all your trains back to Fredericksburg, and whatever falling back you may be forced to do, do in that direction." The rebels did indeed push on as far as the Fredericksburg road, but Ferrero and his colored division handled them severely. Twenty-seven wagons were captured in the first surprise, but all retaken ; and on the soil of Virginia, men who

had once been slaves beat back the forces of those who had held them in slavery. It was the first time at the East when colored troops had been engaged in any important battle, and the display of soldierly qualities obtained a frank acknowledgment from both troops and commanders, not all of whom had before been willing to look upon negroes as comrades. But after that time, white soldiers in the army of the Potomac were not displeased to receive the support of black ones. They had found the support worth having.

By dark, the whole movement of Ewell was repulsed, and several hundred prisoners were left in Tyler's hands. The loss on the national side was six hundred killed and wounded; and as the rebels came out from cover and were badly beaten, their losses were doubtless heavier. Warren had participated in the battle, on the left of the Second corps, and when the rebels were seen to be repelled, he was ordered to fall upon their flank and rear with the view of cutting off and capturing Ewell's entire column; but he failed to carry out his instructions, and under cover of night the enemy retired.\*

This movement of the rebels had been planned as soon as the shifting of Grant's column to the left was discovered, and Lee doubtless hoped to find the

\* Lee was hardly ingenuous when he reported this assault to Seddon, the rebel Secretary of War, in the following words: "The enemy continues to drift towards our right. To develop his purpose, General Ewell was directed to cross the Ny and find his right. He discovered their main body between the Spottsylvania and Fredericksburg road and the Telegraph road, and returned within our lines." Early, however, not knowing the coloring thus given to the movement after it had failed, blurts out the facts in the text: "On the 19th, General Ewell made a movement against



national right weakened and unprepared. Ewell advanced a mile and a half beyond the Ny, and absolutely struck Grant's communications on the Fredericksburg road, but he must have been surprised to find the army in such strength at the point attacked, and sorely disappointed at the greeting he received. Grant indeed, although in this instance he had not the initiative which he always sought, was no less ready than when he took the lead. His orders and movements were prompt and pertinent. He was, however, usually at his best when there was most need. His faculties always responded to an emergency.

This was the last important assault made by Lee outside of cover, during the Wilderness campaign. He had, indeed, striven to regain what he lost on the 12th of May, but even then he took no initiative, and from this time forth he remained on the defensive. Doubtless the defence was stubborn, prolonged, tenacious; doubtless full of ingenuity, courage, and skill; he was still ready to repel, ready to thwart; able to manœuvre, able to endure; but never again, in this campaign, able or ready to assault in force. Like the Roman gladiator when the net was thrown around him, he struggled in the toils to delay, but hardly to escape, the final blow.

As it was not until after nightfall that Ewell the enemy's right, and to create a diversion in his favor, Thomas's brigade was thrown forward, and drove the enemy into his works in front of the salient against which Burnside's attack had been made on the 12th, while the whole corps was held in readiness to co-operate with Ewell, should his attack prove successful; but as he was *compelled to retire*, Thomas was withdrawn." This is more than an attempt to discover Grant's right, and more than a mere return within Lee's ilnes.

was repelled, the movement to the left was necessarily postponed. It was yet uncertain whether Lee would not attempt to renew the attack, or under cover of it, assault elsewhere. At ten P.M., Grant said to Halleck: "Not knowing the exact position and danger our trains at Fredericksburg will be in, if we move, I shall not make the move designated for to-night until their designs are fully developed." The trains indeed were a constant source of anxiety; they numbered four thousand wagons, bringing rations and ammunition to the front, and carrying back incessant relays of wounded; for the fighting and marching had been so continuous that no intervals were left during which the badly wounded could be cared for at the front, and they were all sent back to Fredericksburg and Washington. "My movements," said Grant, "are terribly embarrassed by our immense wagon train. It could not be avoided, however." And again: "We want no more wagons or artillery."

On the morning of the 20th, Hancock was moved back to the position he had occupied before the fight, in readiness again to start at dark, according to his previous orders. The Second corps had now not rested a single day since the 2nd of May. The marching and counter-marching, in rain and dust and mire and fog; in the darkness of night, and the oppressive heat and glare of day; over marshes, and through forests and tangled undergrowth; across fields where there were no roads, and rivers where there were no bridges; in burning woods where the men were stifled by smoke, and over plains where they were drenched by driving rain; halting to fell forests, and make roads, and build bridges—all told

on the physical, and consequently on the moral strength of the army. None but a soldier knows how the fatigues of such a campaign affect the spirits and the endurance and even the valor of soldiers. These long periods without rest or sleep, and with hurried meals—when the nerves are always strung, the men always expecting battle, always on the look-out against surprise—these wear out the vital force which is indispensable even to moral courage. Besides this, the marching up and down over the same ground, the advancing, apparently only to withdraw, the manœuvring, so far as the troops could see, to no purpose, was not only wearisome, but discouraging. It was impossible for even officers, absorbed in their immediate duties, and observing only a limited portion of the force or the field, to form a correct idea of the object of half the manœuvres in which they were engaged; while private soldiers could hardly ever know whether Grant's aim was attained or not, whether an engagement was a feint, or an attack only a cover: all they knew was their own hard duty—to march, and to fight, to suffer, and obey. How well and patiently and unflinchingly they performed that duty, those who watched them saw. It was indeed with something of the same supreme persistency which their leader needed if he would succeed. The men and their chief must allow no exhaustion, no weariness, no disappointment, no apprehension to overcome them, if they meant to accomplish their task.

Grant appreciated all the trials of his soldiers, he felt for their sufferings, and was alive to all the anxieties, not only of the army, but of the government and the country. He knew that all anxieties



and all responsibilities centred upon him, but he did not quail. The expectation of what he had to encounter had not deterred him in advance; its reality did not overwhelm him now. His despatches show the man. They betray no false or boastful spirit: he acknowledged his losses and the fierce opposition he had met, greater even than he had anticipated, greater than he had known elsewhere; but there was no lowering of tone, no lessening of confidence. He braced himself anew for the contest, and had no thought but of eventual victory.

On the 6th of May, in his first despatch from the Wilderness, he said to the government: "We have engaged the enemy in full force since early yesterday morning. So far there is no decisive result, but I think all things are progressing favorably." On the 7th: "I think the loss of the enemy must exceed ours, but this is only a guess, based upon the fact that they attacked and were repulsed as often." Again, on the same day: "At present we can claim no victory over the enemy, neither have they gained a single advantage. The enemy pushed out of his fortifications to prevent the position being turned, and have been sooner or later driven back in every instance." May 8th: "The result of the three days' fighting in the Wilderness was decidedly in our favor. The enemy having a strongly entrenched position to fall back on when hard pressed, and the extensive trains we have to cover, rendered it impossible to inflict the heavy losses upon Lee I had hoped;" but in the same despatch, he said: "The best of feeling prevails in this army, and I feel at present no apprehension for the result."

On the 10th: "The enemy hold our front in very strong force. . . . I shall take no backward step."

On the 11th: ". . . I am satisfied the enemy are very shaky and are only kept up to the mark by the greatest exertions on the part of their officers, and by keeping them entrenched in every position they take. . . . The result to this time is much in our favor."

On the 12th: "The enemy are obstinate, and seem to have found the last ditch."

On the 15th: "Little will be done until there is a change of weather, unless the enemy should attack, which they have exhibited but little inclination to do for the last week." May 16th: "We have had five days' almost incessant rain, without any prospect yet of it clearing up. . . . The army is in the best of spirits, and feels the greatest confidence of ultimate success." May 19th: "I wish you would stir up the navy. . . . I shall make a flank attack in the morning."

With his subordinates he was equally resolute and confident. To Meade, on the 5th of May, he said: "If any opportunity presents itself for pitching into a part of Lee's army, do so, without giving time for dispositions." This was the first order to Meade after leaving Culpeper, and the key-note of the whole campaign. To Burnside on the 6th, he said: "Push on with all vigor so as to drive the enemy from General Hancock's front, and get in on the Orange and Fredericksburg plank road at the earliest possible moment." On the 7th, to Meade: "It is more than probable that the enemy will concentrate for a heavy attack on Hancock this afternoon. In case they do, we must be prepared to resist them, and follow up any success we may gain,



with our whole force." To Burnside, on the 9th, when that officer reported an advance of the rebels: "Direct Wilcox to entrench and hold his position strongly, only falling back at the last extremity, expecting the enemy if they have gone in force towards him, to be attacked from here." On the 10th, to the commanding officer at Aldrich's: "The enemy is moving in force on our right; is supposed to be advancing rapidly. Prepare to protect trains, and attack him if he comes within your reach." To Burnside, the same day: "If you have any possible chance of attacking their right, do it with vigor and with all the force you can bring to bear." Then came the orders to Meade and Burnside of the 11th, for the famous assault: "Push in if any opportunity presents itself." "Move against the enemy with your entire force promptly and with all possible vigor;" and the despatches of the 12th itself, already quoted, "Push on with all possible vigor." "Push the enemy with all your might. That is the best way to connect. We must not fail," etc., etc., etc. To Burnside on the same day, at 3.15 P.M.: "Keep your division commanders on the look-out, to take advantage of any weakening on your front to meet it." And still later: "Act on the offensive to-morrow with your artillery, and annoy the enemy all you can." On the 13th: "Keep up a threatening attitude, ready to attack if the enemy weakens in your front, or to support Warren and Wright, if necessary." To Ferrero, on the 14th, announcing that the enemy's cavalry was said to be in the rear: "Keep a sharp look-out for this cavalry, and if you can attack it with your infantry and cavalry, do so." To Meade, on the 15th, referring to an expected



attack on Burnside : " If they move on him, the best possible relief will be, to move the whole army of the Potomac forward." To Tyler, on the 16th : " I want and must have the whole of your command here by to-morrow night at furthest." On the 17th, to Burnside : " Be prepared to follow Hancock and Wright if they should succeed, or to strengthen Warren if the enemy should move on him." On the 18th, to Meade : " Wright and Burnside should force their way as close up to the enemy as they can get without a general engagement, or with a general engagement if the enemy will come out of their works to fight." The directions for Hancock, on the same day, were to " fight the enemy in whatever force he can find him ;" the whole army to " follow and attack, if possible, before time is given to entrench." On the 19th, Burnside was ordered to " find the end or right of the enemy's main line. . . . If they move away, we want to follow close upon them." On the 20th : " Feel for the enemy, to keep him well employed."

And so, underrating no obstacles, disguising no misfortunes, yet full of confidence and courage ; inspiring the government and the country, urging his subordinates to every effort, removing those who flagged or failed, stimulating or instructing when he thought it necessary, attending even to little needs, supervising often minute details, caring for the wounded,\* arresting the stragglers, promoting

\* Immediately after the battle of the Wilderness, Grant sent one of his own staff to collect the wounded left behind in the region which had fallen temporarily into rebel hands. The enemy, however, refused to allow this officer to perform his task, unless application were made in writing by Grant; when this was done, the request was still

those who deserved it, sending artillery back and hurrying infantry forward, Grant moved the army of the Potomac, again by the left flank, and again nearer Richmond.

The national losses around Spottsylvania, from the 8th to the 21st of May, were two thousand two hundred and seventy-one killed, nine thousand three hundred and sixty wounded, and one thousand nine hundred and seventy missing; total, thirteen thousand six hundred and one. Those of Lee are utterly unknown. Four thousand prisoners and twenty cannon were captured from him on the 12th, and on that day, certainly, his killed and wounded equalled Grant's.

refused, because the letter had been addressed to the "Commanding officer of the Confederate forces," and not to Lee by name; this punctilio was immediately acquiesced in by Grant, but still quibbles were raised; until finally a body of troops sufficient to awe the rebels was dispatched, and the wounded were brought back within Grant's lines by force.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Advance of army on 20th of May—Exposure of Grant's head-quarters—Supineness of Lee—Character of country between Spottsylvania and North Anna—Lee's ignorance of Grant's movements—Breckenridge and Pickett reinforce Lee—Grant's arrival at North Anna—Warren crosses river—Repulses Hill—Hancock's successful advance—Burnside's failure to cross—Repulse of Crawford and Crittenden—Strength of rebel position—Critical situation of Grant—Failure of Lee to avail himself of opportunity—Grant re-crosses the river and extricates his army—Sheridan starts for the James—Battle at Yellow Tavern—Defeat of rebels—Death of Stuart—Sheridan enters outworks of Richmond—Crosses Chickahominy—Arrives at James river—Returns to army of Potomac—Object of Butler's campaign—Strategical advantages of Richmond—Grant's orders to Butler—Seizure of City Point—Subsequent movements of Butler—Petersburg in danger—Alarm in Richmond—Concentration of rebels—Delay of Butler—Beauregard's strategy—Battle of Drury's Bluff—Defeat and retreat of Butler—Grant's chagrin—Withdrawal by Grant of portion of Butler's force.

At Hanover junction, a mile or two south of the North Anna river, the Fredericksburg railroad is crossed by the Virginia Central, which connects the valley of the Shenandoah with Richmond. This was a point of the first strategic importance, for it controlled the communications of the rebel army with the richest portion of Virginia, as well as with their capital; and towards the North Anna, Grant now directed his columns. The distance by the Telegraph road, running almost in a straight line from Lee's camp, was twenty-two miles; by any other



route, not less than thirty-five. Grant's plan was to push the Ninth and Sixth corps close to the rebel works in front of his own left, and, under cover of this operation, move Hancock and Warren far enough south to interpose them between the enemy and the North Anna.

Hancock was accordingly ordered to march by Guinea station and Bowling Green to Milford, taking position on the south bank of the Mattapony,\* and fighting the enemy in whatever force he could find him. He started at eleven o'clock on the night of the 20th of May, and by daylight had reached Guinea station, where a slight resistance was offered, but easily overcome, and before night of the 21st, his whole corps had arrived at Milford. At this point he encountered a brigade of reinforcements from Beauregard's command,† on its way from Richmond to join Lee. This force, however, was speedily driven out of its rifle-pits and across the Mattapony, which here crosses the railroad. Sixty or seventy prisoners were taken, and the bridge was secured. But the news of the movement had been carried to Lee, who telegraphed that day to Richmond: "The enemy is apparently again changing his base. . . . This morning an infantry force appeared at Guinea's. His cavalry force at Downer's bridge on Bowling Green road. He is apparently placing the Mattapony between us, and will probably open communication with Port Royal."‡

\* The four streams called by the Indians, "Mat," "Ta," "Po," and "Ny," unite near Milford, to form the Mattapony.

† Kemper's brigade.—See Hancock's Report.

‡ See Appendix for this despatch in full.

Warren followed Hancock at ten A.M. on the 21st. The route was circuitous and long; but it was hoped that the threatening attitude of Wright and Burnside would delay the rebels at Spottsylvania, until the other portions of the army should be fairly on their way. The skirmishes at Guinea and Milford station, however, betrayed the national advance, and Lee again had the infinite advantage of an interior line. He at once extended his own army in the same direction with his antagonist, and by the Telegraph road.\*

But although the rebel leader was vigilant, he was not bold. Grant now offered him a most inviting opportunity. On the night of the 21st, Hancock was at least twenty miles from Spottsylvania, Warren was at Guinea station, ten miles from any other portion of the army, and only two of the national corps remained in their former lines. A more hazardous disposition of his forces was seldom made by the national commander. But Grant had begun to know his opponent, and was confident that however careful Lee might be to present an unbroken front, to close up every gap, to defend every point, he was most unlikely to avail himself of any offensive chance. The separation of the roads and their devious course made the dispositions adopted by Grant inevitable, if the movement was to be executed at all, and although fully alive to its perilous character, he did not hesitate.

He was amply justified by Lee's timidity; for although the rebel general detected the movement, and should have divined its purpose, he made no

\* "I am extending on the Telegraph road, and will regulate my movements by the information I receive."—*Lee to Davis, May 21.*

attempt to interfere. He of course perceived the imminent danger to which Grant was exposed ; he felt indeed that he ought to attack, and that he would be expected to do so, and excused himself in advance to his government : " His route, I fear, will secure him from attack, until he reaches the Pamunkey." But if Lee ever meant to assume the offensive, this was the moment, with Grant on the arc of the circle of which he held the chord ; one national corps at Milford, another at Guinea, and two at Spottsylvania, and all in motion by different roads with which they were unacquainted, while the rebels knew every plantation path and every ford, and every inhabitant was a friendly guide for them and a spy on Grant. But Lee had made one attack in force in the Wilderness, and did not care to attempt another, although the present opportunity was still more favorable, and to strike a separated army in motion and in flank is almost victory assured.

He, however, resisted the temptation. The Fabian policy suited his nature best. He preferred to husband his resources and to wear out Grant. This was indeed the natural policy of a second-rate commander ; but a man of genius or audacity should have massed his forces and hurled them on the divided enemy. To have separated Grant from his base, or destroyed a single corps at this juncture, would have inflicted infinite injury, while the moral effect on the South would have been worth all its cost. For although the rebel authorities sought to diffuse the idea that Lee was driving or ensnaring Grant ; although from Lee's own despatches, one would hardly suppose that he had retreated a step



or suffered a rebuff during the entire campaign ; the country and the army, on both sides, were very well aware which commander was retreating, and which advancing ; they knew that every day brought each army nearer to the rebel capital, the one to defend, the other to assail. No amount of misrepresentation could disguise this fact ; and the effect on the spirit of each command was what might have been anticipated. The rebels felt that they were falling back in the presence of an enemy, and were depressed, though desperate, while the national troops were inspired with the conscious elation of pursuit and victory.

But since Lee was unable by some great stroke to divide and conquer his enemy, or even to attack him when divided, his best, indeed his only course, was that which he pursued—to protract the struggle ; to make it tedious and difficult ; to throw himself always in the way ; to entrench behind every obstacle—river, or ridge, or thicket, or swamp ; to take every advantage of defensive position and interior lines ; to move more quickly than his antagonist, by familiar and shorter roads ; to fight, but never in the open field ; to defend, never to advance ; to repel, never to assault. The patience, the persistency, and skill, with which all this was done were admirable.

On the night of the 21st of May, Grant's headquarters were near Guinea station, and so exposed that orders were sent to Warren to furnish a guard of a brigade. The enemy's cavalry intervened between the general-in-chief and the Second corps, and Hancock's messengers were captured, while Lee's signals were read, announcing that he had discovered

the movement.\* At dark, there was no news from either Hancock, Wright, or Burnside. Only Warren was near, and firing had been heard in the direction of Spottsylvania.

It was three o'clock in the morning before word came in from Burnside. He had been ordered to march by the Telegraph road to Thornburg, as soon as the withdrawal of Warren was complete, crossing the Po, at Stannard's mill. If the enemy, however, held the ford at that place in too great force, the Ninth corps was to follow Warren. The rebels were found entrenched at Stannard's, and evidently prepared to dispute the passage. Burnside, therefore, abandoned the attempt to move by the Telegraph road, and turned into that by which Hancock and Warren had marched. He thus again gave Lee the interior and shorter line. A serious attack at this point, however, must certainly have been resisted, for by abandoning Stannard's, Lee would have suffered himself to be out-flanked; and a battle here was not desirable to Grant, as Lee had a river in his front and the whole rebel army within supporting distance, while the national forces were widely separated and on the march. The Ninth corps had been directed, if possible, to move by the Telegraph road; but Grant hardly hoped that his astute antagonist would permit the manœuvre, and he did not censure Burnside for turning so readily away.

\* The same code of signals was in use in both armies, having been devised by a West Point graduate before the war. Although the key was frequently changed, Grant's officers were skilful enough to decipher many of the enemy's despatches, when they could perceive the motions of the signal flag by which field messages were communicated.

Meanwhile, at Spottsylvania, an attack had been made on the Sixth corps, doubtless an attempt to discover if the national troops were still on that front in force: this, however, was easily repelled by Russell's division, and early on the morning of the 22nd, Burnside arrived at Guinea station, followed closely by the Sixth corps, now the rear-guard of the army.

Hancock, on the left, being still far in advance, was now ordered to remain at Milford until the other corps could be brought within supporting distance; while Warren, who had the right, was pushed forward to Harris's store, and Burnside to New Bethel church and the crossing of the Ta; the Sixth corps again had the rear. Warren soon came into the Telegraph road, now no longer guarded, for Lee had passed on the day before; the last of the rebel trains could be seen beyond the Mattapony, and fifty or sixty stragglers were captured, but no fighting occurred. Again their ignorance of the country greatly impeded the march of the national columns; the maps were incorrect, and the guides unwilling or false. Engineers and staff officers were sent out in all directions to learn the roads and ascertain the movements or position of the enemy, and every house was entered in the search for information.

The character of the country had now entirely changed. The army had emerged from the Wilderness into an open territory, where the roads were broad, and the landscape, diversified by gentle undulations and watered by abundant streams, was radiant with verdure and fragrant with blossoming crops. After struggling through gloomy thickets and under inclement skies, the men moved quicker in this



brighter atmosphere, and refreshed their eyes with the sight of fields which had as yet escaped the ravages of war. But although no hostile foot had trodden the soil, the region had suffered severely. From the Rapidan to the North Anna not twenty men were seen by the national soldiers, except in arms. In all the hamlets and homesteads, only the old, or the decrepid, or women were to be found. Doubtless, some fled at the approach of the army; the slaves were hidden, or driven away with the cattle; and if, here and there, a white man had evaded the conscription which made desolate the homes of the South, he was careful not to present himself to Northerners.

On the 22nd of May, Grant, Meade, and Burnside, with a few of their officers, halted for an hour or two at a charming plantation, overlooking the valley of the Mattapony. They did not enter the mansion, but sat in the wide porch, their escort resting under the trees, while the Ninth corps marched by. The master of the house was a colonel in the rebel army, and only two ladies, his wife and mother, with a few female slaves, were visible. The wife was young, and evidently near her confinement; she asked eagerly for news, especially from the West, where her husband was serving. They told her of Sherman's advance into Georgia, but she refused to believe them; for the rebel government sedulously kept all bad news from its people, and fed them with false stories of success. But before the conversation had ended, a despatch arrived from Halleck, announcing that Sherman had taken Rome and crossed the Etowa river. Grant read the telegram aloud, and the poor woman burst into tears,

Until that moment she had really thought that Johnston was driving Sherman.\*

Meanwhile, Lee had reached Hanover junction, and at half-past nine A.M., he telegraphed to Richmond: "I have arrived at this place with the head of Ewell's corps. Longstreet is close up. Hill I expect to come in on my right, but I have not heard from him since I left him last night. I have learned as yet nothing of the movements of the enemy east of the Mattapony." And so, notwithstanding his superior opportunities for obtaining information, his acquaintance with the country, and the sympathy of the inhabitants, the rebel chief entirely misapprehended Grant's situation and designs. He still believed the national army to be east of the Mattapony,† when it was in sight of his own rear-guard on the Telegraph road, and he massed his troops to prevent the crossing of the Pamunkey, while Grant was rapidly moving to the North Anna;‡ a blunder similar to that he committed after the battle of the Wilderness, when he fancied his antagonist was retreating on Fredericksburg, while Grant was in reality advancing towards Spottsylvania. He seems to have had no appreciation of the character of his adversary, and, in these instances, hardly an appre-

\* The mother meanwhile had been bantering Burnside, who was justly proud of his command, and asked the old lady if she had ever seen so many Yankees before. "Oh, yes," she replied; "*as prisoners*. I have just come from Richmond."

† See Lee's despatch, page 218.

‡ "It appears that the rebel general was misled by Hancock's march to Bowling Green and Milford, and had massed his forces lower down to resist our crossing over the Pamunkey."—*Dana*, May 23. See also page 220.

ciation of the strategical necessities of Grant's situation.

Between the 22nd and the 25th of May, Lee received reinforcements of at least twelve thousand soldiers. Breckenridge arrived from the Valley, with all of his command except Imboden's force;\* Pickett brought an entire division;† and Hoke's brigade, of Early's division, also came up from Richmond.‡ The rebels had discovered that it was in front of Grant they must concentrate their force; and having beaten back his two subordinates in the Shenandoah valley and on the James, they hurried the men who had been opposed to Butler and Sigel, to reinforce the army under Lee.

At eight A.M., on the 22nd, Grant telegraphed to

\* On the 4th of May, Breckenridge reported his effective force as 6,438, his aggregate present as 7,731. On the 20th, he reported to Lee, from Hanover junction: "I have just arrived. Have 2,500 effective total infantry, and four pieces of artillery." Early makes the number 3,000, and Grant, at the time and afterwards, estimated it much higher.

† Pickett's division return for November 27th, 1863, shows his present for duty at that time to have been 9,162, and his aggregate present, 10,350. This is his latest division return on file, prior to rejoining Lee; and in the interval, he had been engaged in only one battle (Drury's Bluff), and then with but three brigades, so that his numbers could hardly have been greatly reduced. Harrison, his adjutant-general, in a little work called "Pickett's Men," says: "Our three brigades were joined in Richmond by Hunton's brigade, and the old division, *once more recruited*, reported to General Lee, in the army of Northern Virginia, at Hanover Junction, on May 25."

‡ Early's Memoir, page 29. On the 20th of April, Early reported his aggregate present as 5,578, his present for duty as 4,538, exclusive of Hoke. As there were three brigades present, it is fair to suppose the strength of his absent one to have been about 1,500.



Washington : "The enemy have evidently fallen behind North Anna. Prisoners have been captured to-day from Pickett's division, and there is evidence of other troops having been sent from Richmond also. Besides these, Breckenridge is said to have arrived.\* . . . I shall be on the North Anna to-morrow, or meet the enemy this side."

At an early hour on the 23rd, the national army again advanced. The Telegraph road crosses the North Anna by a wooden bridge, half a mile west of the Fredericksburg railroad, and two miles north of Hanover junction. Six miles further up the stream is Jericho, and about half way, by road, between the bridge and Jericho, is Ox ford. This was the extent of Grant's information in regard to the crossings of the stream. Warren was ordered to strike the North Anna at Jericho ford, Hancock to cross by the Telegraph bridge, extending his line eastward, so as to hold the Fredericksburg railroad, while Burnside was to move between the Fifth and Second corps, and Wright to support Warren. The map showed only two roads for all four corps, but Burnside and Wright were directed to take plantation roads, and to impress guides, so as, if possible, to make their way according to the plan described. Grant rode this day with the Second corps. About noon, he halted at a house near the river, where Lee had rested the day before, and learned from the inmates that the entire rebel army had crossed. As Hancock's advance approached the

\* This despatch is dated the same day, and at nearly the same hour, as Lee's: "I have learned nothing of the movements of the enemy, *east of the Mattaponi.*" Grant was evidently better informed in regard to the movements of his enemy than Lee.

stream, the enemy could be seen in large force, marching in column on the opposite bank, evidently just arrived. Notwithstanding all his advantages, Lee was hardly in time to dispute the passage.

Soon after midday, Warren also reached the North Anna, at Jericho mills, where the river is a hundred and fifty feet wide, and the banks are bluffs, fifty or sixty feet high. The stream is fordable, however, although breast-high, and sharpshooters were at once pushed across, followed by a compact body of infantry. A single regiment of the enemy immediately withdrew, and Warren promptly threw a pontoon bridge, over which he moved his artillery and a portion of his infantry, urging the remainder by the ford. By five o'clock, his whole command was on the southern bank, and he had begun entrenching. Crawford had the left, and Griffin the centre; but before Cutler had assumed his position on the right, the enemy attacked him vehemently, with Hill's entire corps. Meredith's brigade, in Cutler's division, broke in confusion, and Griffin was for a time in danger. The disorder, however, was only temporary. The line was soon established, and the rebels were repulsed, with heavy loss in killed and wounded. Several hundred prisoners also fell into Warren's hands, and he was not afterwards disturbed.\*

As soon as it was known that the Fifth corps had become engaged, Hancock, on the left, was also ordered to advance. On the northern side of the

\* Lee says of this affair: "The Fifth corps, General Warren's, crossed at Jericho ford on our left, was attacked by A. P. Hill, and his advance checked." It was Hill who was checked, for Warren was not advancing, but entrenching, when the attack was made; and Lee fails to mention his heavy losses, including the capture of five hundred rebels.

river, a tongue of land is formed by the junction of Long creek with the North Anna; and on this tongue, the enemy had thrown up breastworks to cover the bridge. Hancock crossed the creek, and finding the rebels in force, at once prepared to assault with Birney's division. An open field, several hundred yards in width, ascended sharply to the bridge head, which was also commanded by guns on the southern side; but the two brigades of Pierce and Egan, moving from different points, charged rapidly up the slope, under cover of a heavy fire from the artillery of the corps. They carried the entrenchments with a rush, driving the enemy pell-mell across the bridge. Many of the rebels fell into the river and were drowned, and several hundreds were taken prisoner. But it was now dark, and Hancock remained on the northern bank, while the enemy still held the railroad bridge, on the left of the Second corps.

Burnside moved by difficult and devious plantation roads, and arrived at Ox ford just before sundown, too late to attempt a passage, but took position so as to cover the ford, entrenching his line. At half-past ten p.m., he was ordered to hold his corps in readiness either to reinforce Hancock, or to effect a crossing in his own front, at daylight. Wright, also, had been greatly delayed in his efforts to find a road, but he finally reached Jericho, and during the night was prepared to support the Fifth corps in case of need. At eleven p.m., Grant telegraphed: "In face of the enemy, it is doubtful whether troops can be crossed, except where the Fifth and Sixth corps are."

In the morning, Potter's division of the Ninth corps was placed under Hancock's orders. During the



night, the rebels had withdrawn from their advanced works in front of the Second corps, and Hancock pushed forward and occupied the bridge without opposition, developing his line at leisure, and seizing the Fredericksburg railroad, south of the river. Warren also advanced as far as the Virginia Central road, and destroyed several miles of rail; while the Sixth corps crossed the river at Jericho, and took position on the extreme right of the army.

But although both national flanks were thus advanced, Burnside, at the centre, had found a more difficult task. Not having reached Ox ford until after dark on the 23rd, and knowing nothing whatever of the character of the ground, he had found it impossible to make an intelligent attack at daylight. The southern bank of the river was densely wooded, and on the high ground in the rear a battery was in position, flanked by rifle-pits. The ford, however, was only knee-deep, and the woods on the northern bank allowed the troops to approach very close to the stream, under cover; so that Wilcox, who had the advance, succeeded in throwing his skirmishers forward and seizing an island near the ford; but no further advantage was gained.

Warren was therefore directed to send Crawford's division down the river on the southern side, and drive the enemy from Ox ford; and at the same time, a brigade of Hancock was ordered up from below, to assist in opening communication; but these troops were unable to effect a junction. Lee had assumed a line of great strength, shaped like the letter V, with one face turned to Warren and the other to Hancock, while the apex, immediately opposite Ox ford, was strongly entrenched. He

thus not only interposed between Grant's two wings, but completely prevented Burnside's passage of the stream.

By this time, however, another ford had been discovered at Quarles's mill, about half way between Ox ford and Jericho ; and here, at one o'clock, Burnside was ordered to send a division across, and move down to assault the enemy, in conjunction with Crawford, of the Fifth corps ; for if Grant meant to remain on the southern bank of the river, it was indispensable to drive back Lee's centre, and establish communication between the national wings. Moreover, it was still uncertain whether the rebels really meant to make a stand at this point, or were fighting only to gain time ; making a show of resistance with a part of their force, while the main body was falling back to the South Anna. Quarles's ford was extremely difficult, but Burnside obeyed ; Crittenden's division made the passage with great celerity, and advanced upon the rebel position ; Potter also had crossed at the Telegraph bridge, and was now on Hancock's right, on the other side of the salient, endeavoring to effect the junction.

Crittenden soon came upon two divisions of Hill's corps, ensconced behind strong earthworks, and a sharp fight occurred ; but the national troops were repulsed with serious loss ; half of Ledlie's brigade, six hundred and fifty men, were either killed, wounded, or captured. The rebels, however, declined to pursue, and Crittenden fell back to connect with Crawford on the right, who also had been severely handled and compelled to withdraw. Neither Crawford nor Crittenden had any artillery south of the river, and until a bridge could be laid at Quarles's,

capable of passing cannon, some anxiety was felt on their account, especially as Crawford had lost his communications with Warren. But as usual, Lee was content with a negative result, and made no attempt to follow up his advantages.

Potter, meanwhile, had attacked on the other flank, but met with no success, though his losses were slight. At six P.M., Gibbon's division, on the extreme left of Hancock, also became engaged, and Barlow was brought up in support, but the rebel line was found to be so strong, and so carefully protected by heavy works and abatis, that the projected assault on that front was abandoned. Of course, the junction with Crittenden, as well as the crossing at Ox ford, was now impracticable. All of Grant's command, except one division of Burnside, was, however, on the southern bank, and that night, the hostile forces slept within musket-shot of each other.

Jericho mills and the Telegraph bridge are fully six miles apart; Lee's centre was at Ox ford, about three miles from either; his right stretched back almost due south, covering Hanover junction, and rested on a series of extensive and impenetrable marshes, known as Sexton's swamp, while his left, running west, rested on Little river. Both flanks were thus made secure by marshes or rivers, and the remainder of the line was strongly fortified; while the interposition of the rebel centre, between the right and left wings of the national army, cut off all communication between them on the southern side of the stream. Lee could thus, not only concentrate on any endangered point of his own line, but mass his forces, and fall on either the national right or left, while the other wing was miles and hours away.



An audacious commander would certainly have sought to attack one flank of the national army before the other could come to the rescue ; but the aggressive spirit that animated Lee a year before had been stamped out at the Wilderness.

The strength of the rebel position was not, however, entirely apparent, even on the morning of the 25th ; and both Hancock and Warren were directed to develop their own lines and completely reconnoitre those of the enemy. At eight A.M., Grant telegraphed to Washington : " The enemy have fallen back from North Anna. We are in pursuit. Negroes who have come in state that he is falling back to Richmond. If this is the case, Butler's force will all be wanted where they are. Notify him to hold Smith in readiness to be moved, but to await further orders." He soon, however, discovered the exact position of affairs ; and the same day issued his preliminary orders to withdraw. Bridges were laid and roads built, to connect the different portions of the army, so that, if Lee should endeavor to use his advantages, troops could be easily moved to any quarter ; and Grant's most imminent danger disappeared. But Lee was so far from making any offensive movement that he allowed large forces to advance both on his right and left, and do great damage to the Virginia Central and the Fredericksburg roads. The rails were torn up for miles, and heated till they could be bent ; the cross-ties were burned, and the roads rendered useless until they should undergo extensive and difficult repairs.

Lee manifested, indeed, throughout this entire movement, an indisposition to attack under the

most favorable circumstances, which is unaccountable. Those who were in his secrets may have been aware of reasons which cannot be surmised ; he may have had plans or intentions that Grant's combinations disturbed ; he may have been misinformed to a greater extent than appears ; he may have been fettered by circumstances in his camps, or at the rebel capital, which have not been revealed ; but nothing apparent to a close observer at the time, or to a careful student afterwards, can explain the remissness of Lee. He planned with ability ; he moved with rapidity ; he repaired his errors skillfully and promptly ; he was always ready to march or to repel, when Grant took the initiative either in fighting or flanking ; his manœuvres were superb, so long as they were intended to hold off his enemy ; but whenever he was required to assume the offensive, he failed. Notwithstanding advantages of position that far outweighed any preponderance in numbers ; notwithstanding an absolute superiority in numbers—for when the rebels were massed and Grant divided, the superiority was on the side of Lee—he declined the combat positively and repeatedly.

On the night of the 20th of May, he had been at once apprised of Hancock's movement, and his own columns were in motion almost as soon as those of the Second corps ; but he neither resisted Grant's isolated advance, nor seriously disturbed the equally detached rear-guard ; although to each he might have opposed a greatly outnumbering force. As has been seen, he entirely misapprehended Grant's design. Not only was his information strangely incomplete, but the conclusions based on such news as he

did receive were far away from the truth. He fancied that Grant was still east of the Mattapony, and would attempt to cross the Pamunkey nearer Richmond; falling apparently into the error which clings to so many still, and supposing Grant's object to have been the capture of the rebel capital, whereas it was the destruction of the rebel army. So Lee moved towards the Pamunkey to intercept Grant, while Grant was advancing to the North Anna to attack Lee.

As soon, however, as the rebel general perceived his error, he repaired it so brilliantly as to convert it into a negative success. His columns must have moved with extraordinary celerity, for on the 23rd, he had evidently been unready to oppose either Warren or Hancock, and was driven back on both flanks; yet he brought up his army in time to prevent the crossing of Burnside and the junction of the national wings. He had now one of those opportunities that occur but rarely in war, but which, in the grasp of a master, make or mar the fortunes of armies and decide the result of campaigns. It is impossible to suppose that he did not appreciate his advantages. It cannot be that, on his chosen ground, he was as badly off as Grant, to whom all was new and strange, and that the peculiarities of the situation only became apparent to him after reconnoitring and fighting, and when it was too late. Yet he contented himself with repelling assaults on his own flanks, allowing Grant almost to envelop the rebel army and destroy its communications on either side. It cannot be pretended that numerical weakness prevented an attack, for the disparity of numbers had disappeared, or rather told in behalf of Lee. Two-thirds of his force was certainly equal to the half of



Grant's ; and he was wasting more men in the assaults which Grant constantly compelled him to resist, than he was likely to lose in a battle with all the odds in his favor. The affair on the North Anna is fatal to Lee's reputation as a great offensive commander.

On the other hand, the most hostile critics are lavish of praise when they describe the withdrawal of the national army from Spottsylvania. The manœuvring, equally skilful and bold, by which Hancock was pushed forward under cover of Wright and Burnside ; the daring persistency in the original plan, not only after Ewell's interruption, but after Grant became aware that Lee had discovered the movement ; the gradual convergence and combination of the various corps by intricate and unfamiliar roads, till they struck the North Anna almost as soon as the rebels, who possessed every advantage ; and the double passage of the river by both Warren and Hancock, in the very teeth of the enemy ;—these are achievements, tactical and strategical, of which any general might be proud. The fact that Lee after all succeeded in checking Grant at Ox ford detracts in no degree from the brilliancy of the previous operations ; for no commander could discover, in advance, the exact position of an enemy concealed by a forest, on the opposite bank of an unknown stream.

The game at this point became superb. Each player put forth all his skill. If the passage of the river, the surprise effected by Grant, the position assumed and maintained on the southern side, redounded to the credit of the national commander—the rapidity with which Lee repaired his fault, the celerity with which he moved his troops, the keenness with which he saw, and the vigor and skill

with which he seized and developed the defensive possibilities of his position, fully rivalled the feats of his adversary. But it was now Lee's turn to attack. It was Grant who was in a dilemma. And just here, the ability and spirit which had served the rebel general so well, seemed to suffer an entire collapse; while, as usual, whatever good qualities Grant possessed culminated at the crisis. Lee remained quiescent, paralyzed, at the most important moment; while Grant, placed in one of the most delicate situations possible in war, extricated himself without the loss of a man. He withdrew on both flanks, in the face of an unbeaten enemy, and executed a double passage of the river, under the very eyes of Lee and his army, and was not disturbed.

The national losses, between the 20th and the 26th of May, were one hundred and eighty-six killed, seven hundred and ninety-two wounded, and one hundred and sixty-five missing; total, one thousand one hundred and forty-three. Those of Lee are unknown.

By this time, Sheridan had rejoined the army of the Potomac, his command having been absent sixteen days. Starting on the 9th of May, from Tabernacle church, while Grant and Lee were fighting for Spottsylvania, he marched by the Telegraph road, his three divisions, in a single column thirteen miles long, moving at a walk by the flank of the enemy: an engagement was imminent at any moment, and it was necessary to keep his force well together. The Ny, the Po, and the Ta were crossed without opposition, but before the North Anna was reached, the rebel cavalry came up with his rear-guard, and attacked it vigorously. Two divisions became engaged, and the fighting lasted until after dark, when the enemy

was beaten off. But while this affair was going on at the rear, Sheridan's advance had made the passage of the North Anna; and, at Beaver Dam station, on the Virginia Central railroad, four hundred national prisoners were re-captured, on their way to Richmond, and a large accumulation of medical and subsistence stores, intended for Lee, was destroyed.

Stuart had blundered seriously in following up Sheridan's rear, but he soon discovered his error, and on the 10th, drew rapidly off; then, urging his horses to the death, he made a prodigious effort to thrust himself between the national column and Richmond. Succeeding in this, he massed his troops at Yellow tavern, about six miles north of the city, on the Brook road. Sheridan arrived at this place on the 11th, having destroyed another depôt of army and railroad stores, at Ashland, on the way. The rebel leader now unwisely divided his command, sending a large force to attack Sheridan's rear, while with the remainder he prepared to oppose the national advance. Sheridan promptly detected his opportunity, and threw two entire brigades against the weakened force in his front. The national onset was vigorous, and the Brook road was quickly carried. But Stuart was still confident, and forming his troops a few hundred yards east of the road, enfiladed it with artillery, "making Yellow tavern a hot place." Sheridan, however, held fast with his two brigades, and ordered the remainder of his force, under Wilson and Custer, to attack the rebel battery and line. The charge was brilliant: moving first at a walk, then at a trot, the troops dashed at the enemy, breaking the rebel line in



pieces, and capturing guns and gunners. Stuart himself was mortally wounded. A charge on the rebel force now coming up in the rear met with equal success, and the engagement was at an end. The casualties were heavy on both sides, but the enemy was scattered and many prisoners were taken. A force was at once sent up the direct road to Richmond, which, dashing across the south fork of the Chickahominy, drove the rebels before it, and entered the outer works of the capital. Sheridan followed this party in person, and discovered a road between the inner and outer lines. He probably could have penetrated the interior fortifications, for the defenders were few and terror-stricken; but his force was too small to hold the works, even if he had carried them; and an attack on Richmond formed no part of his orders or his plans. He determined, therefore, to move to the left, between the works and the Chickahominy, and so strike the James and communicate with Butler.

Accordingly, on the night of the 11th, having cared for his wounded, he again took up the line of march. At daybreak, however, his advance was checked by rebel batteries near Mechanicsville, and he turned to re-cross the Chickahominy, at Meadow bridge; but the bridge had been burned, and the rebels, having rallied again, now offered a fierce resistance, doubtless hoping to isolate, and then destroy, his little command. A force had also come out from Richmond, and Sheridan thus had the enemy attacking his vanguard, while Meadow bridge was destroyed in his rear; the Chickahominy was on one side, and the outworks of Richmond on the other. But he sent out scouting parties to dis-

cover fords, and rebuilt the bridge under a heavy fire from the opposite shore; then, crossing rapidly with a part of his command, he drove his adversary several miles. In the meantime, the force coming out from Richmond was repulsed with slaughter by the troops under Wilson and Gregg; and on the afternoon of the 12th, Sheridan's whole command was on the north side of the Chickahominy. On the 13th, he resumed his eastward march, and that night encamped unmolested at Bottom's bridge. On the 14th, he recrossed the Chickahominy, marched through White Oak swamp, and striking the James river before dark, went into camp at Haxall's landing, three or four miles above City Point, on the northern side. Here he communicated with Butler, and obtained supplies.

After resting three days, he set out, on the 17th, to return, moving by a circuitous road, for he was ignorant of the position of either Grant or Lee, and obliged to grope blindly along, feeling out to the left, for the enemy. His dispositions, however, were skilful and cautious, and on the 19th, he arrived at White House, on the Pamunkey river. The bridge had been burned, but mounted parties were sent out through the country, each man ordered to bring back a board, and the river was made passable in a day. On the 22nd, he was at Aylett's, on the Mattaponi, where he ascertained the position of the two great armies; and on the 24th of May, he reported again to Meade, in the vicinity of Chesterfield.

He had marched two hundred miles, and lost four hundred and twenty-five men, in killed, wounded, and missing, besides nearly three hundred horses;

the animals that failed on the road being shot by the rearguard, lest they should recover and become serviceable to the enemy. His operations had greatly alarmed and confused the rebels. He had drawn off their cavalry, so that Grant's ponderous train was unmolested and unthreatened during the complicated manœuvres on the Mattaponi and the North Anna; he had destroyed vast stores of ordnance and provisions which the enemy could hardly spare; had done great damage to the two railroads that connected Lee with Richmond, entered the works of the rebel capital, and killed the greatest cavalry leader produced by the South during the war. But most important of all, the spirit of the rebel cavalry was broken, for after this time it never again at the East, unless supported by infantry, made head against the national horse.

The operations on the James, meanwhile, had come to an untimely end. The object of Grant in Butler's campaign has already been fully set forth. It was to prevent reinforcements being sent to Lee, to separate Richmond from the South and West, and, if possible, to capture the town.

Nature had done little to suggest that this inconsiderable provincial place should become the prize of protracted sieges and campaigns, but the congregation of railroads that centre there gave to Richmond a strategic importance from the beginning of the war; and when once its political consequence became established, these same roads enabled the rebels to add to the strength and resources of their capital, to supply from it their greatest army, to pour into it the wealth of all their granaries and the troops of all their territory, and as fast as



one avenue of approach was interrupted, to resort to others as advantageous and as accessible. On the north, the Fredericksburg and the Virginia Central railroads had once connected Richmond with Washington and the Valley of Virginia; but these routes, of course, became useless, when a hostile army approached the city from that direction. It was, however, on the south and west that it was most important for access to be free; and here, the radiating roads seemed planned expressly to fit the city to resist a siege. The principal railway leads directly south to Petersburg, about twenty miles from the capital, where it divides into two great branches, one known as the Weldon road, running to Weldon in North Carolina, and there connecting with all the Atlantic coast as far as Florida; while the other, the Southside road, runs west to Lynchburg and Chattanooga, and is even more important, connecting Richmond with the entire region between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi river. From Lynchburg also, a line runs north into the Valley of Virginia, and thus, even when the Virginia Central road was cut, afforded communication between Lee and Breckenridge, as well as between the latter and his capital. Still another important line running south-west out of Richmond, opened a way into North Carolina, as far as Danville; but in May 1864, this was connected with no other route, except at Burksville junction, where it was crossed by the Southside road. Besides these, there was a line from Petersburg to Norfolk, nearly parallel with the James; but as the Norfolk terminus was in the hands of national forces, this road was of little use to the

rebels. The James river canal, reaching across the mountains, and into West Virginia, also poured its daily and important contributions into the rebel capital, which had now become the strategical as well as political focus and heart of the rebellion; the point where all the arteries of supply were concentrated, and from which those supplies were again discharged to nourish and maintain the principal forces of the Confederacy.

Important thus as a military storehouse, and as a base for Lee, and threatened again and again by the national armies, Richmond had been extensively fortified before the spring of 1864; and, on the north and east, it was protected by works of formidable character. Towards the south, however, the defences were comparatively insignificant; for although the especial railway approaches upon which the very existence of Richmond as a stronghold must depend were all on the southern side of the James, the national advance had hitherto invariably been made from the north. The rebels themselves seemed to apprehend so little danger exactly where they were most exposed, that Petersburg, the point where the two great lines connecting Richmond with the West and South converge, was still unfortified.

Grant, however, from the first believed that the strength of Richmond was at the same time its weakness, and from the first determined to attack it on the southern side. While, therefore, on the Rapidan, he himself engrossed the attention of the army by which the city was defended, he directed Butler to advance along the south bank of the James, against the uncovered capital. That com-

mander was ordered to cling as close to the river as possible, to secure a footing as far up the south side as he could, and to invest the place, with his left resting on the James, above the town; a position which would of course sever the railroads, and separate Richmond not only from Petersburg, but from the Confederacy.

On the 2nd of April, Grant wrote to Butler: "Operate on the south side of the James river, Richmond being your objective point." "The fact . . . that Richmond is to be your objective point, and that there is to be co-operation between your force and the army of the Potomac, must be your guide. This indicates the necessity of your holding close to the south bank of the James river as you advance." "All the minor details of your advance are left entirely to your direction." On the 16th, he wrote: "Seize upon City Point, and act from there, looking upon Richmond as your objective point. . . I do not pretend to say how your work is to be done, but simply lay down what, and trust to you and those under you for doing it well." Again, on the 18th, from Culpeper: "You also understand that with the forces here, I shall aim to fight Lee between here and Richmond, if he will stand. Should Lee, however, fall back into Richmond, I will follow up and make a junction with your army on the James river. Could it be certain that you will be able to invest Richmond on the south side, so as to have your left resting on the James above the city, I would form the junction there. Circumstances may make this course advisable anyhow. . . I would say, therefore, use every exertion to secure a footing as far up the south side of the river as you can, and as



*soon as possible.* If you hear of our advancing from that direction, or have reason to judge from the action of the enemy, that they are looking for danger to that side, attack vigorously, and if you cannot carry the city, *at least detain as large a force there as possible.*"\*

These sentences contain the pith and marrow of Grant's instructions to Butler. Anything else was a repetition or enforcement of the same idea—to advance against Richmond on the south side of the James, take the city if he could, but at least detain a large force in its defence, and isolate it from the Confederacy. The details, as in all Grant's campaigns, were left to the important subordinate. There was no vagueness in the aim proposed; that was definite and absolute; but the commander on the ground was to select his own immediate routes and occasions and means. In this way Grant had already treated Sherman; in this way he afterwards

\* It has been declared that there are documents in existence, not embodied by Grant in his official report, which "clearly set forth," that he expected to "approach the capital from the direction of the north and west, and swinging across the James, make a junction with Butler, whose *signal for action was to be Grant's guns thundering on the north side.* But as Grant's guns were never heard thundering on the north side, it is a matter of less surprise that Butler also was foiled on his part." Grant's instructions to Butler on this subject, from the time he assumed command of the armies until the 16th of May, will be found in the Appendix, complete, and the reader will perceive that they contain not one word about Grant's "swinging across the James," nor of "the signal for action being Grant's guns thundering on the north side." No such documents as are described ever existed, no such statement as is made is warranted by facts. What Grant did say about the north side, is quoted in the text: "You also understand that with the forces

treated Thomas and Sheridan, and in this way he now treated Butler.

It is true, however, that if the general-in-chief had been allowed his choice, Butler would not have commanded the army of the James. Grant left the West, fully intending and prepared to remove that officer, whom he knew only by reputation, as one who had stepped into the highest grade in the army at the beginning of the war, without experience in a subordinate position. Want of this experience Grant did not believe a proper preparation for high command. In his first interview with the President and the Secretary of War, he expressed this view, in which he was supported by Halleck, the retiring general-in-chief; but he was informed that political considerations of the highest character made it undesirable to displace Butler: the administration needed all its strength, and could not afford to provoke the hostility of so important a personage; and Grant was obliged to yield. He next proposed to leave Butler in command of the Department of

here, *I shall aim to fight Lee between here and Richmond*, if he will stand. *Should Lee, however, fall back into Richmond*, I will follow up and make a junction with your army on the James river. *Could it be certain* that you will be able to invest Richmond on the south side, so as to have your left resting on the James above the city, I would form the junction there. Circumstances *may* make this course advisable anyhow." And in the same despatch: "*If you hear of our advancing from that direction, or have reason to judge from the action of the enemy that they are looking for danger to that side, attack vigorously.*" This is called a "signal for action"!! This is the "guns thundering on the north side;" language which is studiously repeated to give the impression that it is quoted. It is unnecessary to discuss an argument based on a mis-statement.

Virginia and North Carolina, but to put W. F. Smith at the head of the column in the field.\* The President and the Secretary acquiesced in this suggestion, but Butler was too shrewd to allow it to be carried into effect. He had a right to command his own troops, and he made it understood without delay, that he intended to lead them in the field. There was no way to prevent this but to relieve him entirely from command, and thus provoke the very opposition which the administration thought it indispensable to avoid.

Grant, therefore, was obliged to work with the tools put into his hands, and since this was inevitable, he treated Butler with the same large confidence and consideration which he accorded to other important subordinates. He gave him two of the ablest professional soldiers in the army to command his corps, in the hope that Butler would avail himself of their talent and experience; he sent him a promising general officer for his cavalry; and offered him the opportunity of capturing the rebel capital; leaving thus what seemed to most men the prize of the campaign within the reach of a subordinate, while he assumed for himself the more difficult task of conquering the greatest army of the Confederacy. When the campaign began, the mass of the rebels at the East were on the Rapidan and in front of Grant, while those on the James, including the garrison at Richmond and the troops at Drury's Bluff, amounted to seven thousand three hundred and eighty-nine men. There was also one regiment at Petersburg. Butler had thirty thousand veterans at Yorktown and Gloucester Point. The nearest

\* See Appendix to Chapter XV. for letter from Grant to Meade, April 9.



possible rebel supports were scattered in North and South Carolina, where, strangely enough, Beauregard and Hoke were, at this very juncture, preparing to act offensively along the Atlantic coast.

Butler moved according to orders, on the 4th of May. Throwing out a few troops in the direction of West Point, with a view of confusing the enemy, he embarked his main force, sailed down the York river, and ascended the James, landing at City Point and Bermuda Hundred, at the mouth of the Appomattox. These points had been selected by Grant, because susceptible of easy defence, and also as affording a good base for operations against either Richmond or Petersburg, or the railway running between. They are distant twenty miles from Richmond and ten from Petersburg; City Point on the right, and Bermuda Hundred on the left bank of the Appomattox river. Above them the James is narrow, and its course was commanded by rebel batteries. The enemy was entirely unprepared, and possession of both points was at once secured. On the 6th, Butler was in position, and had begun entrenching. Three thousand cavalry under Kautz also started on the 7th, from Suffolk, near the mouth of the James, to cut the Weldon road, and thus prevent communication between Beauregard and Richmond.\*

The alarm of the rebels was extreme. Pickett was in command at Petersburg, and on the 5th, he telegraphed to his government: "Enemy have possession of City Point. I have but one regiment

\* "If you think it practicable to use your cavalry south of you so as to cut the railroad about Hicksford, about the time of the general advance, it would be of immense advantage."—*Grant to Butler, April 2.*

here. Troops arriving from the South. Can't I detain them?" Later on the same day, he said: "Have you any guards between this city and Richmond? The enemy have landed at Bermuda Hundred. Unless you guard the railroad, they will cut off communication. . . ." On the 6th: "Do you intend holding the railroad between this place and Richmond? . . . The enemy will try to cut the railroad to-day, advancing from Bermuda Hundred, I think." Beauregard, who was still at Weldon, was this day ordered to "forward by rail the troops ordered from the South, to Petersburg, which is much threatened." On the 7th, he replied: "Three thousand enemy's cavalry have crossed Blackwater, cut wire along Norfolk railroad, marching probably on Stony creek or this place. Am making best arrangement practicable to oppose them, but most of the cavalry of the department is still with General Hoke, whose forces will only commence arriving to-night at Kingston. Half of Wise's brigade is expected here in a few hours on its way to Petersburg." Thus unready were the rebels to oppose any prompt or vigorous movement of national troops, south of the James. As late as the 7th, Beauregard was still at Weldon, Hoke had not arrived even at Kingston, Wise was only on the way to Petersburg.

On the 6th and 7th, Butler sent out detachments to cut the railroad between Petersburg and Richmond, but opposition was offered, and although, on the 7th, some damage was done to the road, the force each day was compelled to return.\* Mean-

\* "On the next day, May 6th, we received the first instalment of troops from the South. A portion of Haygood's South Carolina brigade (and only a portion of it) arrived; and although General

while, Kautz had succeeded in burning the bridge at Stony creek on the Weldon road, thus cutting in two the troops of Beauregard, now making all haste towards Petersburg.

For the rebels were rapidly collecting their scattered forces from every point. They made heroic exertions, knowing well that the salvation of their capital, and it might be of their cause, was involved. The expeditions on the coast were at once abandoned; Wise, Hoke, and Colquitt, with their commands, arrived at the front. Pickett's own division, belonging to Longstreet's corps, but separated from it since the battle of Gettysburg, also came up. All the troops moving to join Lee were detained, and

Pickett was telegraphed to send them directly on to Richmond, he took the responsibility of detaining them at Port Walthall Junction, about six miles on the railroad between Petersburg and Richmond, where they had a pretty severe skirmish with Butler's advance column, and succeeded in keeping him off from the railroad or breaking the connection between Petersburg and Richmond. It was all-important that this connection should be kept open, for the whole of Beauregard's army was still south of Petersburg, and on its way towards the defences of Richmond on the south side. In this we succeeded, and only by the timely intervention of this gallant little force of Haygood. . . The following day" (the 7th), "a *portion* of Wise's Virginia brigade arrived in Petersburg and were sent out on the line towards City Point. . . Three brigades of our own division" (Pickett's) "were dropping into Petersburg as fast as the 'snail express' would bring them."—*Pickett's Men. Walter Harrison, Assistant Adjutant and Inspector-General of Pickett's Division.*

This authority is of course not official, but the statements agree with those in the rebel despatches at the time. They show that, on the 7th, Butler was opposed by portions of only two brigades, with perhaps the addition of Pickett's men, as the separate brigades came "dropping" into Petersburg.



others were ordered from Florida, and even from Dalton, in front of Sherman, to the defence of Richmond. The commanders at Macon, Raleigh, Columbia, and Montgomery were notified that "the utmost activity and energy should be employed in collecting and organizing the reserves, and hurrying them into positions to relieve every trained soldier that can be spared for service in the field. We are in the very crisis of our fortunes, and want every man. This by the President's direction." Seddon, the rebel Secretary of War, telegraphed to Beauregard: "This city is in hot danger. It should be defended with all our resources to the sacrifice of minor considerations. You are relied on to use every effort to unite all your forces at the earliest practicable time with the troops in the defences, and then together either fight the enemy in the field, or defend the entrenchments."

When Lee, on the 11th of May, called for help at Spottsylvania, Jefferson Davis himself replied: "I have been painfully anxious to send your troops to you, but unaccountable delays have occurred, and we have been sorely pressed by the enemy on the south side. Are now threatened by their cavalry on the Brook turnpike and Westham road. I go to look after defences." At the same time went up cries from the coast that it was bare, and appeals from West Virginia, where Averill was pressing the rebels hard; but, at the East, commanders were told they must strip still closer, and at the West, to look out for themselves. Bragg, who held a position equivalent to that of general-in-

chief,\* declared : "The forces in Western Virginia and East Tennessee must provide for any emergency there. . . . No reinforcements can be supplied McCausland from here." On the 17th of May, he announced to Breckenridge : "Every railroad leading into the city is cut." The Danville road had been struck by Kautz. "It was too late," says a rebel diary, "for the evacuation of Richmond."

The tocsin sounded all day, calling the militia to arms. The armory was opened, and all who desired them, were furnished with weapons. All classes not in the army, clerks and messengers in the War Office, foreigners even, all men capable of bearing arms were summoned to the defence, and imprisoned, if they failed to respond. The negroes too were in the field, as teamsters, or digging on the fortifications ; "the few who remained, standing at the corners of the streets, looking, some wistfully, some in dread, in the direction of the enemy. There is but little fear of an insurrection," writes one of the besieged, on the 17th of May, showing plainly what was in his thoughts.

But while the rebels were thus straining every nerve, and Grant and Lee were contending so fiercely between the Rapidan and the North Anna, Butler allowed the precious days to slip by. After

\* Adjutant and Inspector-General's Office,

Richmond, Virginia, February 24, 1864.

General Braxton Bragg is assigned to duty at the seat of government, and, under the direction of the President, is charged with the conduct of military operations in the armies of the Confederacy.

By order.

S. COOPER,

Adjutant Inspector-General.

once landing and entrenching, he sent out only detachments to cut the Petersburg railroad, each of which accomplished its purpose at the time, but *returned*: on the 9th, he inflicted serious damage on the road, but still left Petersburg itself, all defenceless as it was, without attack, and advanced only two or three miles up the James. He had landed on the 5th, and it was not until the 11th, that he issued orders to his corps commanders to advance and develop the enemy's strength in the direction of Richmond. This operation occupied four days more, at the end of which he found himself in front of the works at Drury's Bluff, about ten miles from Bermuda Hundred, and as far from the rebel capital. In the meantime, Beauregard had collected a force of twenty-five thousand men, and on the 16th of May, he came out in force and attacked the national army.

On that day, Butler's lines ran east and west, reaching from a point near the James river to the Petersburg railroad, a distance of three miles. Smith had the right, towards the river, and Gillmore the left, covering the railroad, and holding a prong of the rebel works, which his troops had carried without hard fighting, three days before. Beauregard disposed his force with great ability. His plan was to advance with three divisions; then, hurling his own left wing on Butler's right, to double it up on the centre, and separate the national column at once from the river and its base at Bermuda Hundred; at the same time, the rebel right was to engage the national left, and finally, a fourth division from Petersburg to come up in rear and complete the destruction of Butler's army. The attack was made in the early morning, and, favored by a heavy fog,



was at first completely successful. Nearly one entire brigade of Smith's command was captured, and the whole national right was endangered. Smith, however, was able to re-form his line, and though obliged to fall back, he succeeded in checking the rebel onset. Moreover, the enemy's advance against the left was not well supported, and the attack by the Petersburg division did not occur at all. Later in the day, a second assault was made upon Smith, which seriously threatened his communications, and he was again obliged to give ground. Again, however, an advance upon the national left was resisted, and Butler might now have redeemed the day, had he moved Gillmore up against the disordered troops of the enemy; but instead of this, alarmed by the danger to Smith's command, he directed the whole line to fall back within the fortifications of Bermuda Hundred, Gillmore not having fired a shot; the enemy made no attempt to interfere, and Butler leisurely retired.\* The national returns show thirty-five hundred killed, wounded, and missing, on the 16th of May, and the rebels admit a loss of three thousand,† but all the advantage was with Beauregard.

He had not indeed accomplished all that his gallant effort and admirable plan entitled him to hope for; but he had absolutely put an end to Butler's

\* General Butler made no report of this campaign, and his only account of the battle will be found in his despatch of May 17th, for which see Appendix. There is no report by Gillmore on file, and that of Smith begins with Butler's order of the 11th. Beauregard's report is quite full, but conflicts in no material point with the statements on the national side.

† "Life and Campaigns of General R. E. Lee," (McCabe) page 500; and other rebel authorities.

campaign ; he had re-opened the avenues to Richmond from the South and West, driven thirty thousand men into a position where they could be of no use to Grant, released at least half that number to reinforce Lee,\* relieved the rebel capital from its most imminent danger, and gained the prestige of a victory. The peninsula of Bermuda Hundred, to which Butler had so promptly retired, lies in the fork of the James and Appomattox rivers, and a strong line of entrenchments reaching across its narrow neck defended him against any attacks from the enemy ; but the rebels also entrenched immediately in his front, and covered their railroads and all that was valuable to them. It required but a small force now to hold this line, and Butler, although in a position of great security, was pronounced by Grant to be as completely shut off from further operations against Richmond, as if he had been in a bottle strongly corked.†

No criticism upon the campaigns of the lieutenant-general can be complete which ignores this total failure of one part of his scheme ; a part too, which he had every reason to expect would have proved of so great assistance. For, even if Butler

\* " I have about 19,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, and four battalions artillery this side Swift creek. Beyond Swift creek, Walker's brigade, and two regiments Dearing's brigade, cavalry."—*Beauregard to Bragg, May 18.*

It will be remembered that this was *after* the battle.

† " His army therefore, though in a position of great security, was as completely shut off from further operations directly against Richmond as if it had been in a bottle strongly corked. It required but a comparatively small force of the enemy to hold it there."—*Grant's Report.*

had not succeeded in capturing or investing Richmond, even if he had been compelled to turn and fight or follow Beauregard, he ought certainly to have detained his enemy on the southern side of the James. He had been hampered by no minute instructions; he was at liberty to take Petersburg, which was completely within his reach from the 6th to the 11th of May; he could have held the railroads, and forced Beauregard to follow or to watch him; he could and should have prevented the concentration which took place after he was on the ground, and by the very roads which he was sent to destroy. But his neglect to seize strategic points was fatal, and the deliberation with which he stopped to fortify, most unfortunate; he might have done all that was necessary in one day, instead of four or five. Each of his preliminary movements was made in piecemeal, detachments only being twice sent out and compelled to return, when a larger force must have utterly annihilated anything that could have been opposed to it; and when actually engaged in battle, his tactics were as faulty as his strategy. He had the opportunity with Gillmore's fresh troops to recover all that was lost by the surprise of Smith; but instead of answering attack by counter-attack elsewhere, he drew in not only the men who had been worsted, but those who had not been engaged; and he, the commander of an invading army, fell back, unbeaten, before an inferior force.\*

\* It has been claimed that Grant could never have really expected Butler to capture Richmond; that it was impossible to invest it from the south bank, where the ground is a low open plain, and that Butler's army could not have "maintained a posi-



Thus Richmond was relieved and the army of Northern Virginia was reinforced. And not only this ; not only the rebel capital, but all the great lines of communication which Grant had so expressly desired and enjoined that Butler should seize, remained in the possession of the enemy. The rebels were masters of the Danville, the Weldon, and the Southside roads, which gave them communication with the whole territory in rebellion ; they held Petersburg, the great outpost of their capital, and maintained a position certain to cost the national forces prodigious efforts to wrest from them. And all this Butler had been expected and directed to forestall.

As early as the 22nd of May, when Grant first became aware of the extent of the disaster on the James, he issued his orders to Halleck : "The force under Butler is not detaining ten thousand men in Richmond, and is not even keeping the roads south of

tion above Richmond, when not only its rear must have been so greatly exposed, but its line of communications with its depôt at Bermuda Hundred must have been quite uncovered to the enemy." These are all difficulties, doubtless, but just such as are encountered in every campaign, and overcome by able commanders. It by no means follows because a critic of a certain calibre sees no way by which they could have been avoided or surmounted, that Grant himself, or Sherman, or Sheridan, or even Butler could not have moved up his base from Bermuda Hundred when he invested Richmond ; nor that skilful engineers could not have devised a plan for investing the city close enough to prevent ingress from the South, without exposing the national army to dangers impossible to repel. The world will probably believe that a good soldier, at the head of thirty thousand men, would have succeeded in keeping Beauregard's scattered forces away from Richmond, in cutting the railroads and keeping them cut, and in detaining reinforcements from Lee, although to some minds all this is inconceivable.

the city cut. Under these circumstances, I think it advisable to have all of it here, except enough to keep a foothold at City Point. . . Send Smith in command." Butler indeed declared on the 24th: "I know I am employing one-third more of the enemy's force than I have, yet as soon as I get my lines so strengthened as to be able to leave them in charge of few men, I shall resume offensive operations at the earliest moment. I telegraph this to correct what seems to be a misapprehension." Grant, however, had made up his mind, and on the 25th, he again directed Halleck: "Send Butler's forces to White House, to land on north side and march up to join this army. The James river should be held to City Point, but leave nothing more than is absolutely necessary to hold it, acting purely on the defensive. *The enemy will not undertake any offensive operations there, but will concentrate everything here.*" When these orders reached Butler, he replied to the Secretary of War: "I had already got my best troops into a movable column for the purpose of offensive operations. . . I found that the rebels had uncovered Petersburg, and its importance as a depôt to them cannot be over-rated. I had prepared to attack the place this morning with every prospect of success, but the imperative orders transmitted through Major-General Halleck, and the arrival of the transportation rendered necessary a change of orders. General Smith embarked last night. . . I regret extremely the loss of this opportunity upon Petersburg."

After this, however, he submitted with a good grace, and not only sent off his army with great dispatch, but on the same day proposed that the

Nineteenth corps, which had been under his command at New Orleans, and by the failure of the Red river campaign was now set free, should be brought to Virginia, "to land here, or at West Point, in reach of General Grant." This was a good suggestion, and Grant eventually adopted it: the Nineteenth corps was ordered to Virginia, by sea. Butler, indeed, was fertile in resource, energetic in will, and not apt to be long cast down. He was always ready to adapt himself to the situation, no matter how disagreeable, when once it became inevitable. His administrative ability was conspicuous, and no one questioned his earnestness. He had many of the qualities that go to the making of a good or even a great soldier, and it is quite possible that if he had worked his way more gradually to high command, and thus acquired the inestimable advantage of experience, his success might have been more marked; but, thrust at once into the most important places, where skilled and instantaneous judgment, military perceptions, and the confidence that comes from assured knowledge are all indispensable, he proved unequal to the emergency.



## CHAPTER XIX.

Consolidation of Ninth corps with army of Potomac—Magnanimity of Burnside—Grant's orders to Hunter—Movement to Pamunkey river—Passage of the Pamunkey—Country between the Pamunkey and Richmond—Advance towards the Chickahominy—Battle at Hawe's shop—Warren attacked by Ewell—Ewell repulsed—Skilful manœuvring of both Grant and Lee—W. F. Smith arrives at White House with part of Butler's army—Sheridan captures Old Cold Harbor—Rebels attempt to retake it—Grant and Lee each send reinforcements—Failure of Warren to carry out Grant's orders—Arrival of Smith—Battle of the 1st of June—Success of Smith and Wright—Grant secures possession of Old Cold Harbor—Grant's anxiety in regard to Hunter—Movement of each army towards national left—Country around Cold Harbor—Strong position of Lee—Grant's plan of battle—Advance from national left—Repeated and gallant assaults—Early success of Hancock—Hard fighting of Smith and Wright—Burnside gains ground—No permanent impression made on enemy's works—Discontinuance of assaults—General advance of national lines—Rebels remain within their fortifications—Despatches to Hunter, Banks, and other distant commanders—Losses at Old and New Cold Harbor—Result of battles of 1st and 3rd of June—Reasons for the assault—Reflections on the campaign—Selection of route—Peculiarities of Grant and Lee—Strategy of each—Mode of entrenching—Numbers, losses, and reinforcements in Wilderness campaign.

On the night of the 24th of May, Grant issued an order adding the Ninth corps to the command of Meade, and, thenceforth, it formed part of the army of the Potomac; a consolidation greatly needed, as well to secure unity and promptness of movement, as for administrative purposes. Burnside was the

senior in rank, and had commanded the army of the Potomac when Meade was serving under him with only a division, but he acquiesced in the new arrangement with magnanimous cheerfulness. "I am glad," he wrote, "to get the order assigning the corps to the army of the Potomac, because I think good will result from it." And on the morning of the 25th, he came out of his tent as Grant was riding by, and before a crowd of officers, repeated the remark: "The order is excellent. I am glad it has been made." On every occasion during the war, when there was need, Burnside displayed the same heroic self-abnegation. His ability has been questioned, his strategy criticized, and sometimes even his vigor denied; but the purity of his patriotism and the loftiness of his public spirit were unsurpassed.

On the 25th of May, Grant became satisfied that Lee had been reinforced by Breckenridge's command. This left the Valley of Virginia open to Hunter, and the general-in-chief at once announced the fact to Halleck, and gave the following orders: "If Hunter can possibly go to Charlottesville and Lynchburg, he should do so, living on the country. The railroads and canal should be destroyed beyond possibility of repair for weeks. Completing this, he could find his way back to his original base, or from about Gordonsville, join this army."

But although aware of this addition to Lee's force from the West, and assured that Pickett's division and Hoke's brigade had arrived from Petersburg; conscious also that his own situation on the North Anna was full of peril, Grant's usual sanguine sentiments did not desert him. On the 26th, he wrote to the government: "Lee's

army is really whipped. The prisoners we now take show it, and the action of the army shows it unmistakably. *A battle with them outside of entrenchments cannot be had.*" He never lost this feeling, but always believed that he was steadily, if slowly, doing what he desired; that he was conquering the spirit of his adversary. "I feel," he said, "that our success over Lee's army is already ensured."\*

When he wrote these words he had begun his preparations for another movement by the left flank. On the 26th, he described his position to Halleck, and said: "To make a direct attack from either wing would cause a slaughter of our men that *even success would not justify*. To turn the enemy by his right, between the two Annas, is impossible, on account of the swamps on which his right rests. To turn him by the left leaves Little river, Newfound river, and South Anna river, all of them streams presenting considerable obstacles to the movement of our army, to be crossed. I have determined, therefore, to turn the enemy's right by crossing at or near Hanover town. This crosses all three streams

\* He succeeded in infusing this feeling into those around him. Mr. Dana, who had seen much of the war, and was an acute observer, wrote, on the 26th, to Stanton: "One of the most important results of the campaign thus far is the entire change which has taken place in the feelings of the two armies. Rebels have lost all confidence, and are already morally defeated. This army has learned to believe that it is sure of victory. Even our officers have ceased to regard Lee as an invincible military genius. On the part of the rebels this change is evinced, not only by their not attacking when circumstances seem to invite it, but by the unanimous statements of prisoners taken from them."

These extracts, as well as those taken from Grant's own despatches, show the belief that prevailed at head-quarters, and also



at once, and leaves us still where we can draw supplies." The movement here described was similar in character and aim to those from the Wilderness and Spottsylvania. Its object was to compel the rebels again to leave the fortifications behind which they were so strong, and in front of which Grant was so exposed; by threatening their communications, to force them still further back towards their capital, and thus a third time to attain by strategy, what had not yet been won by arms: Grant was still fighting it out on the same line. The North and South Anna unite, a little below Hanover junction, to form the Pamunkey; and Hanover town, on the last-named stream, where Grant proposed to cross, is distant from the position held on the 25th of May, about thirty miles. From Lee's headquarters it was only half as far. The rebels had again the interior line.

Halleck was now informed that the base of the army would be removed from Port Royal, on the Rappahannock, to White House, on the Pamunkey, a few miles above the point where that river and the Mattaponi unite to form the York. This place is accessible by sea from both Washington and

the especial ground for that belief; viz., the fact that the rebels declined to fight outside of entrenchments; or indeed, at all, unless they were assailed.

The remarks of Dana in regard to the feeling of the officers were not without foundation. The army of the Potomac had been so often repelled by Lee that many who served in it had an exaggerated notion of his ability, which lessened as they found their new leader, not only able to contend with the rebel chief, but steadily getting the upper hand. When all was over, Grant had no warmer admirers than the officers and men of the Eastern armies; but their admiration was the growth of a year.

City Point ; supplies could be forwarded from the national capital, and hither Butler was directed to send a portion of the army of the James. White House is twenty-five miles from Hanover town.

As early as the 25th of May, Wilson's division of cavalry had been transferred to the right of the army of the Potomac, and pushed across the North Anna, to Little river, with orders to demonstrate vigorously, and attract the enemy's attention to that quarter. During the night, the trains, and the artillery not in position belonging to the right wing, together with Russell's division of the Sixth corps, were quietly withdrawn from the south bank, and moved by the rear of Burnside and Hancock, without discovery. At daylight, Russell was halted, and waited for night again, his place in front of the enemy being filled to conceal his absence. Lee was completely deceived by Wilson's feint, and so far from suspecting the manœuvre, he telegraphed on the 26th, to Richmond : " From present indications the enemy seems to contemplate a movement on our left flank." But that afternoon, Sheridan at the head of Torbert and Gregg's divisions, pushed rapidly on the road to Hanover town, Russell following after dark. Torbert was ordered to Taylor's ford, to make a feint of crossing, and Gregg was to do the same at Littlepage's, but as soon as night fell, each was to leave a small force to keep up the demonstration, and with the bulk of his command, move rapidly to the real crossing at Hanover ferry. These orders were brilliantly executed, and on the morning of the 27th, Torbert's leading brigade forced the passage of the Pamunkey, driving in a small body of cavalry and capturing

thirty or forty prisoners. The whole division then advanced to Hanover town, on the right bank, where Gordon's brigade of rebel cavalry was encountered and driven as far as Crump's creek, two or three miles in the direction of Hanover courthouse; Gregg was moved up to this line, and Russell's infantry encamped on the south bank, near the crossing.

All night of the 26th, the withdrawal of the army went on. The remaining divisions of the Sixth corps, on the extreme right, moved first, followed by the entire Fifth corps, which stood next in line; Hancock and Burnside retaining their position on the left and centre, while the right wing marched along in their rear. The Sixth corps fell into the road taken by the cavalry and Russell's division the day before, and Warren followed a more circuitous route, further from the river. The Ninth and Second corps next effected their withdrawal, with equal caution, leaving guards in front of the enemy till the last moment, and destroying the bridges after they had crossed; while Wilson's cavalry held the fords, as they were successively abandoned by the infantry. Hancock now followed Wright, on the ridge next the Pamunkey, and Burnside marched after the Fifth corps, by the more eastern road. The trains took a still more circuitous route, by Bowling Green and the left bank of the Mattaponi; and Wilson covered the entire rear of the army. On the night of the 27th, Grant's head-quarters were at Maggahick church, twenty-two miles from Jericho, and Wright was within three miles of Hanover ferry.

Long before daylight on the 28th, the army was



in motion again. The Pamunkey was crossed at two or three points before noon, and a line was formed a mile and a half out from the river; the Sixth corps holding the right, Hancock the centre, and Warren the left, while Burnside remained on the north bank, to be near the trains. Sheridan was in the advance.

Early on the 27th, Lee became aware of the movement, and at 6.45 A.M., he telegraphed to his government: "The enemy retired to the north side of the North Anna last night. . . Cavalry and infantry have crossed at Hanover town. I have sent the cavalry in that direction to check the movement, and will move the army to Ashland." He made, however, as we have seen, no serious opposition to the crossing, and as he fell back once more, and once more drew closer to his capital, he must have wondered whether he should ever leave it again at the head of a Confederate army.

Thus had the national army a third time executed, with complete success, one of the most difficult operations known in war. In the very sight and within musket-range of a powerful enemy, it had not only withdrawn from his presence, but crossed a deep and difficult river before his eyes; then, moving by devious and unfamiliar roads, it marched in heat and dust, by night and day, for more than forty hours, until it struck another stream where its adversary was unprepared; crossing this river also, before the passage could be disputed, it assumed a position which at once compelled the enemy to evacuate the works where he was so secure, to abandon the advantages which he had not used, and to fall back in haste to protect his communications and his capital.

At the same time, Grant's cumbersome train of four thousand wagons was moved, and the base of his army transferred from Port Royal to White House. The movements of the infantry had been masked by the cavalry, one division guarding the trains and the rear, while the other two led the advance and secured the crossings: the main body thus marched unimpeded to its new position, and arrived intact; not only itself rescued from imminent peril, but in its turn threatening the very existence of the enemy. The entire operation proceeded by regular and successful steps to the intended result, without interruption or disarrangement of the original plan.

The country in which Grant was now operating is greatly cut up by the numerous flats and marshes that line the banks of the sluggish streams flowing along the Virginia coast to the sea. The Mattapony and its morasses, the Pamunkey and its swamps had been crossed, but before the army there still lay the bottom lands of the Chickahominy, a wide paludal waste, where so many national soldiers had found a grave, two years before. Pine woods, thick but not lofty, interrupted the advance, and jungles of shrub and dwarf trees added to the difficulties of an invading army. The hills, however, are few, and the ascent generally not difficult; though here and there a ravine offers a good point of defence, which the rebels were never slow to seize. Through this region the Totopotomoy creek oozes languidly along, rising near Atlee's station on the Virginia Central railroad, and flowing north-easterly till it empties into the Pamunkey, through Pony swamp.

Two main roads run south-west from Hanover ferry to Richmond, not twenty miles away; each

road crossing the Chickahominy, which half encircles the city on the north, and flowed immediately outside the rebel fortifications. The northern and more direct road crosses the river at Meadow bridge, near the Central railroad; the other runs south from Hanover town for about four miles, and then southwesterly, by Old and New Cold Harbor, till it strikes the Chickahominy at New Bridge. Hanover town by this road is three or four miles further from Richmond than by the upper route. Between these, still another road leaves the one first mentioned, about six miles from the Pamunkey, crosses the Totopotomoy, and then runs through Mechanicsville, two miles east of Meadow bridge, to Richmond. The three are known as the Hanover town, the Mechanicsville, and the Cold Harbor roads. On the upper routes, large cleared fields are interspersed with patches of heavy forest, the Totopotomoy being the only important stream; on the Cold Harbor road, the woods are denser and the creeks and swamps more numerous. Old Cold Harbor itself is a mere cluster of houses, about half way between Hanover town and Richmond: at this point, however, the roads diverge, leading not only to Richmond, but to the Chickahominy at Bottom's bridge, and, still more important, to White House, the new base for Grant's supplies. New Cold Harbor is another hamlet on the same road, a mile and a half nearer Richmond.

Grant was of course aware that the rebels, having so much the shorter line, could confront him again whenever they chose, as soon as the Pamunkey was crossed. The point for him to ascertain was—whether Lee meant to offer resistance on the northern side of the Chickahominy, or fall



back behind that stream, and await attack within the fortifications of Richmond ; for this was all the choice now left the rebel leader ; so far had Grant pushed back the army of Northern Virginia. On the 28th of May, accordingly, Sheridan was ordered to demonstrate in the direction of Mechanicsville, in order to discover the position of Lee. Advancing with Gregg's division as far as Hawe's shop, he there encountered the rebel cavalry, dismounted and behind temporary breastworks, with infantry supports.\* Gregg attacked this force with vigor, and a sharp fight occurred, neither side giving way for a time ; but late in the evening, Custer's brigade coming up, was dismounted and formed in close column of attack ; then, charging with Gregg's division, the two together drove the enemy out of his line of works, and forced him to leave his dead upon the field. The whole army had been moved forward during the afternoon, so that the acquisition of the cavalry was secure. The battle indeed had been fought almost immediately in front of the Second corps, which was busily occupied throwing up entrenchments during the engagement. The loss was heavy on both sides,† but Hawe's shop was

\* Sheridan's Report.

† "Sheridan lost forty-four killed, including officers, and three hundred and six wounded. He buried more of the rebels than of his own. Their wounded they got off."—*Dana to Stanton*, May 29.

The numbers in Mr. Dana's reports cannot be absolutely relied on, but in most instances they are those accepted by Grant at the time, although subsequent information often corrected them.

Lee reported this fight as follows : "General FitzLee's division of cavalry engaged the enemy's cavalry near Hawe's shop about

worth all it cost, for it commands the roads to Hanover court-house, Meadow bridge, and Mechanicsville, as well as to Hanover town. Sheridan buried his own dead and those of the enemy, and after dark, moved to the rear of the infantry.

At six P.M. this day, Lee reported that his headquarters were at Atlee's station, and that his army in front of that position was extending towards Totopotomoy creek. He had moved again by the shorter line, and thrown himself once more across Grant's path. "As far as I can ascertain," he said, "none of the enemy have advanced south of that creek. I believe that he is assembling his army behind it."

On the 29th, Grant ordered a reconnoissance in force. The Sixth corps moved to the right, as far as Hanover court-house, but found no enemy; Hancock advanced towards the Totopotomoy, and Warren was on the left of Hancock, while Burnside crossed the Pamunkey, and came up between the Fifth and the Second corps. There was no heavy fighting this day, but at night, the army had advanced three miles. Lee, it was now evident, was in force north of the Chickahominy, covering the two railroads and the three country roads to Richmond. There were indications also of a rebel movement towards the national left, in the direction of the Cold Harbor road; this threatened not only White House and Grant's supplies, but the route by

noon to-day, and drove them back upon their infantry. . . I have not, however, received very definite information as yet either as regards their position or number." As the battle lasted until dark, he evidently had not learned the final result when he announced a victory at noon; but he failed to report the contrary issue, when it became known.

which Smith must march with the troops from the army of the James. Sheridan was therefore ordered to move in that direction with two divisions, and watch the enemy vigilantly.

On the 30th, the national advance continued. The Sixth corps was withdrawn from Hanover court-house, so as to close in on Hancock's right; Hancock himself pushed out as far as the Totopotomoy, where he found the rebel position very strong; Burnside crossed the creek, and Warren moved on the Mechanicsville road. All along the centre front the skirmishing was brisk, and late in the afternoon, near Bethesda church, the head of Warren's column encountered Early's command, now constituting the right wing of Lee's army. The rebels attacked Warren vigorously, pushed back his advance, and even attempted to turn his left flank; but Grant promptly ordered a forward movement of the Second corps in order to relieve the left, and Hancock advancing, carried a line of rifle-pits in his front, which the enemy, though he struggled hard, was unable to regain. Warren, meanwhile, brought up his own troops, and repelled the assault of Early, driving the rebels a mile and a half. This advance of the enemy, however, was only an attempt to discover the strength and position of the national left, and in no way intended to provoke a general battle.\* All these engagements, indeed, were mere preliminaries to that more important struggle which both parties were well aware was now at hand.

The events of this day made it evident that both armies were gradually moving southward, Grant by the left flank, and Lee by the right, each in the

\* Early's Memoir.



direction of Old Cold Harbor, which, it has been seen, commanded not only Grant's line of communication with his new base, but also his shortest route to the James, if he determined to cross that river to the southern side. In view of this last contingency, Grant said, on the 30th, to Halleck: "I wish you would send all the pontoon bridging you can to City Point, to have it ready in case it is wanted." Four days earlier, engineers had been sent from the army of the Potomac to Fort Monroe, "with all the bridging material at their command," and ordered to "hold themselves in readiness to move up the James river at very short notice;" while a train of sixty bateaux, sufficient to build a bridge twelve hundred feet in length,\* had also been sent from Washington.

Late on the 30th of May, Grant received the news of W. F. Smith's arrival at White House, with the reinforcements from Butler's army, and announced the fact to Meade: "General Smith will debark his force at the White House to-night, and start up the south bank of the Pamunkey, at an early hour; probably at three A.M. It is not improbable that the enemy, being aware of Smith's movement, will be feeling to get on our left flank, for the purpose of cutting him off; or, by a dash, to crush him, and get back before we are aware of it. Sheridan ought to be notified to watch the enemy's movements well out towards Cold Harbor, and also on the Mechanicsville road."

\* As early as the 24th of May, Grant had directed Meade to take every means to destroy the two railroads north of Richmond, while the army lay near their junction, "especially in view of the probability of a siege." This order was verbal, given in my hearing, and entered in my note-book at the time.

Grant also warned Smith himself of the possibility that the rebels might interpose between his force and the army of the Potomac, but added: "They will be so closely watched that *nothing could suit me better than such a move.*"\* In conversation at the time, he repeatedly expressed a wish that Lee would attempt this manœuvre; for in that event, he meant at once to push his whole army to the right, and move between the enemy and Richmond. But the rebel chief was far too cautious to afford this opportunity. No chance of crushing a corps in the national army could tempt him to expose his own command outside the security of fortifications.

This night, the Fifth corps had the left of the army, on the Mechanicsville road, and about three miles south of the Totopotomoy; the Ninth corps was on the right of the Fifth; then came the Second; and, on the extreme right was the Sixth corps, on the Hanover court-house road, about six miles south of the court-house. At the same time, Lee's force reached from near Atlee's station on the left, to the vicinity of Cold Harbor on the right, with his centre covering Mechanicsville. Grant's right, therefore,

\* The movements of the enemy this evening on our left, down on the Mechanicsville road, would indicate the possibility of a design on his part to get between you and the army of the Potomac. They will be so closely watched that nothing could suit me better than such a move. Sheridan is on our left flank with two divisions of cavalry, with directions to watch as far as he can go on the Mechanicsville and Cold Harbor roads. This with the care you can give your left flank with the cavalry you have, and the brigade sent you, and a knowledge of the fact that any movement of the enemy towards you cannot fail to be noticed and followed up from here, will make your advance secure."—*Grant to Smith, May 30.*

threatened Atlee, while his left was gradually advancing towards Cold Harbor. The hostile lines stretched from north-west to south-east, over about nine miles' extent of country, conforming closely to each other's movements; advancing, retiring, yielding, resisting, and each commander watching eagerly for some unwary action of his adversary.

In the meantime, Wilson had been sent to cover the right wing of the national army, and to destroy the railroads and bridges as far as possible, in the direction of the two Anna rivers; for Grant never lost sight of the possibility of a siege of Richmond, in which event, the destruction of these northern railroads would become of immense importance. Sheridan, with the remainder of the cavalry, was still on the left and rear, north of Matadequin creek, and pushing his pickets out towards Old Cold Harbor, which was occupied by the enemy in some force. The rebels seemed quite aware of the importance of the position, and in order to cover it, thrust forward a body of troops as far as the Matadequin, where they encountered Sheridan's advance. His pickets, however, held fast, till a whole division of cavalry came up to their support, when a stubborn fight ensued; but the rebels finally gave way, and were pursued for several miles.

On the 31st of May, Sheridan advanced with his two divisions upon Old Cold Harbor, which he found defended by cavalry and infantry, behind breastworks of logs and rails. He had a hard fight, but at last succeeded in carrying the position. The rebels, however, returned upon him in such force, that he thought it impossible to retain his prize, and moving out in his turn, he was met by a command



to hold Cold Harbor at every hazard, until relieved. He instantly ordered the re-occupation, reversed the temporary breastworks thrown up by the enemy, so as to make them available for his own troops, dismounted his cavalry, placing them behind the works, and distributed his ammunition in boxes along the line. Meanwhile, the rebels could be heard issuing commands and making preparations to attack in the morning ; for darkness came on before their assault was made.

Grant had expected a serious battle before obtaining possession of Cold Harbor, and the moment he heard of its capture, the Sixth corps was ordered from the right to the relief of Sheridan ; while Smith, now moving up from the Pamunkey, was directed to march upon the same point. Wright was to take position on the extreme left, and Smith to come in between him and Warren. The Sixth corps marched all night, passing in rear of the army. But Lee at once discovered the manœuvre, and withdrew Anderson's corps from the rebel left, marching it towards Cold Harbor,—a movement exactly parallel to that of the Sixth corps. The armies were now so close to each other that either commander was able to detect the slightest change in the position of the other, and Lee could have no doubt of what the withdrawal of Wright must mean : the battle was now certain to be for Cold Harbor. Thus, the two columns were headed each to the south, while the troops already on the ground prepared to dispute its possession with all their strength, until the supports arrived.

Just after daylight on the 1st of June, the rebels in front of Sheridan marched to the assault. He

permitted them to approach close to his little works, and then poured in a fire of his batteries and carbines with such effect that they recoiled in great confusion. Determined, however, to retake the place, they rallied and assaulted again, but with the same result: Sheridan held fast. Wright had been expected to reach Cold Harbor by daylight, but the road was long, and it was nine o'clock before his jaded troops arrived. At that hour, however, the head of the Sixth corps column came in sight, and the cavalry which had been struggling manfully for now four hours, against far outnumbering forces, was at once relieved. Old Cold Harbor was secured.

Meanwhile, exactly as Lee had discovered the movement of Wright, so Grant detected the transfer of Anderson. At an early hour on the 1st of June, a heavy column was observed passing in front of the Fifth corps, towards the right of Lee, and Warren was at once ordered to fall upon it in flank, while Wright was directed to attack the head of the column with his whole command, and crush the rebels on their arrival, before they could have time to entrench. If these orders had been carried out, the destruction of Lee's army might have been consummated at Cold Harbor. But Warren opened with artillery, instead of attacking in force,\* and at

\* "Wright was ordered to attack the enemy at once, but reconnoitred, skirmished, and delayed, till he found, at 2 P.M., that there were no longer any rebels before him. . . As I reported in my despatch of 10 A.M., Warren was ordered to attack a column of the rebel infantry which was passing towards Cold Harbor, but instead of falling upon it in force, he opened with artillery, and at 3 P.M., reported that the entrenchments of the enemy were exceedingly strong, and that his own lines were so long that he had no

three P.M., he reported that the entrenchments of the rebels were exceedingly strong, and his own lines so long that he had no mass of troops to assault with. Wright also reconnoitred and skirmished, until at two P.M., he found no rebels in his front : the enemy had fallen back and fortified, as soon as it was certain that Old Cold Harbor was lost to Lee. The condition of the Sixth corps, after a long and fatiguing night march, and its newness on the ground, accounted, indeed, for its delay ; yet the enemy had the same difficulties to overcome ; Anderson marched nearly as far as Wright, and then began entrenching ; while Warren's failure to assault was doubtless the result of those peculiarities already described, which made this officer hesitate

mass of troops to attack with. It seems that Wright blundered in the execution of his order to march to Cold Harbor. Instead of having his advance there at 9 A.M., it was General Grant's and Meade's design that his whole corps be on the ground at daylight, when a rapid attack in mass would certainly have routed the rebel force which a little later assaulted Sheridan, and an advantage might easily have been gained, which, followed up by Sheridan's two divisions of cavalry, might have led to the dispersal of Lee's army."—*Dana, June 1.*

It must be remembered that Mr. Dana's criticisms were not invariably those of the general-in-chief, although they frequently, perhaps generally, concurred. Mr. Dana was naturally freer in his censures than the officer whose responsibilities not only to those he commanded, but to the government and the country, were so great. Besides this, strictures often seemed warranted at the moment, which a fuller knowledge and later judgment quite reversed. Probably, Dana himself would not have liked to endorse all the despatches he sent from the turmoil of the camp and the battle-field. His opinions were his own ; but as a rule, the statements of fact that he made to the government were identical with what Grant believed at the time.



so often and so long, before an action, although when once engaged, no soldier in the army excelled him. Grant was bitterly disappointed at the double mishap; he had hoped, not only that Warren would attack Anderson in flank and while he was in motion, but that both Wright and Smith would be on the ground in time to rout the rebel force which in the morning had assaulted Sheridan. But the enemy was allowed to fall back unpursued, while the Sixth corps took quiet possession of Cold Harbor, and rested for several hours; and at three o'clock, the head of Smith's column had not yet appeared. War, however, is full of unexpected contingencies, of long-sought opportunities unseized, and brilliant plans devised with skill and elaborated with care, yet baffled by petty circumstances at the very moment when they should have been fulfilled.

Smith had arrived at the White House at eleven o'clock on the morning of the 30th, with sixteen thousand men on transports. He debarked his troops that afternoon, and as time was of the first importance, took up his march on the 31st, without waiting for supply wagons, or even for ammunition, beyond what the men carried in their cartridge-boxes. That night he halted at Old Church, on the Cold Harbor road, and before daylight of the 1st of June, he received an order to move direct to Newcastle, on the Pamunkey river, and place himself between the Fifth and the Sixth corps. A battle was imminent, and he started at once, not even allowing his men time to make their coffee; but when he arrived at Newcastle, the Fifth and Sixth corps were nowhere in the vicinity. A mistake, it was evident, had occurred, and he sent at once to ask for an

explanation ; but before his messenger returned, another arrived from Grant, to say that Smith should have marched to Cold Harbor instead of to Newcastle. The officer who wrote out the order had substituted the wrong name. The command was at once marched back over the road it had just travelled, but this time in the direction of Cold Harbor. The day was intensely hot, and the dust stifling ; the men from Butler's command were unused to marching, and fatigue and exhaustion thinned their ranks ; one division had been left at the White House, to guard that point ; but the remainder of the column, now not more than ten thousand strong,\* pushed on, and soon after three o'clock, Smith had reached his place between Wright and Warren. He had marched more than twenty-five miles.

Meanwhile, Lee had extended his line to correspond with that of Grant, and Hoke now held the rebel right, with Anderson immediately on his left. Directly in front of the national left, there was an open space of cleared ground, varying in width from three hundred to twelve hundred yards ; beyond that rose a thick wood, in which the rebels had formed their line. The national assault must be made across this opening, and exposed to cross and enfilading fires.

By five o'clock, having carefully and judiciously disposed their forces, both Smith and Wright made a spirited advance. They crossed the open space under a murderous fire, reached the wood, and penetrated between Hoke and Anderson, driving

\* Smith's Report.

back both rebel commands. Wright captured the works in his front, and five hundred prisoners, and sent back word that he hoped to extend his lines on the left as far as the Chickahominy. Smith, at the same time, drove the rebels through the wood, carried a line of rifle-pits, and took two hundred and fifty prisoners; but when he attempted to advance beyond the wood, into a second clearing, the fire he met was so heavy that his men were forced to return. His line did not extend on the right, far enough to connect with Warren, so that he had no cover on that flank, whence the heaviest fire proceeded. He was able, however, to hold the works he had gained. Wright, also, soon found himself in front of fortifications that baffled all his efforts, and advanced no further than his first onset had carried him.

In the meantime, the rebels had made repeated attacks upon Warren; they came up three times, and in three separate lines, but were terribly slaughtered by canister, and sent back in disorder every time. Hancock and Burnside, on the right, also repelled attacks, made, doubtless, with the view of distracting Grant. The rebels thus gained nothing by any of their attempts, while, on the national left, Wright and Smith held all they had won, and the enemy was fairly thrust back upon New Cold Harbor. Sheridan had been expected to combine in this assault, so as to attack the rear of Lee's right wing, during Smith and Wright's advance; but his orders failed to reach him in time. During the night, the rebels made repeated attacks on Grant's left, seeking apparently to regain what they had lost; the fighting at times was quite as severe as in any



of the contests of the day ; but the enemy was invariably repelled. The ground won, on the 1st of June, was of the highest consequence to the national army ; it cost two thousand men in killed and wounded, but it secured the roads to the James, and almost out-flanked Lee.

Grant promptly determined to push the advantage he had gained ; and soon after dark, Hancock was withdrawn from his position on the extreme right of the army, and ordered to form on the left of the Sixth corps, between Wright and the Chickahominy. The night was dark, the heat and dust were oppressive, and the roads unknown ; one division went astray, and the whole command was thrown into confusion ; but Hancock succeeded in reuniting his column, and reached Old Cold Harbor by half-past six in the morning. He had marched twelve miles. An attack had been ordered at daybreak, but time was absolutely indispensable to collect and rest the exhausted men, and allow them opportunity to cook their rations. The assault was accordingly deferred till five in the afternoon.

During the day, Warren's left was extended, in order to connect with Smith, while Burnside, who had the extreme right, was drawn in as far as Bethesda church, so that the entire national army was now on the south side of the Totopotomoy. While executing these manœuvres, both Warren and Burnside had been attacked, but after some hard fighting, they repelled and punished the enemy, losing, however, several hundred prisoners, by the out-flanking of the skirmish line. Neither of these commanders had seized the opportunity to assault, when the rebels thus came outside of cover. To gain such opportu-

nities had been the object of all Grant's movements during the campaign ; and he was greatly annoyed, when at last they were offered, to find them unimproved. The line was so long and the roads were so difficult that the general-in-chief was not informed of the rebel attack until all was over, and his chagrin was extreme when he learned of the failure to assault in return. He directed Meade to instruct corps commanders to be more prompt on such occasions ; they were not to wait for orders, when the enemy came out of his works, but to assault at once ; and more than this, to follow up every success with vigorous offensive movements. Too little independence was manifested, and all but Hancock were slower than the lieutenant-general desired. There was danger of falling into the fault of the enemy, and becoming content with preventing disaster or repelling assault.

These attacks of the rebels, however, had little or no importance in themselves. Lee had, indeed, made several attempts at assault, during these two or three days, but none in force ; his offensive movements were confined to efforts to annoy or distract the national army, to feel Grant's strength, or discover his position ; like Early's reconnoissance at Bethesda church, on the 30th of May, or the interruption to Warren's flank movement, just described. None of these operations really exposed a corps of the rebel army ; none were worthy of the name of assaults ; none were of the nature of Grant's great attacks, in which he sought to crush a wing or divide an army. But all the more, because of this excessive caution of Lee, Grant was anxious to tempt or force his adversary further from cover, to convert

every skirmish between the lines into a general engagement in the open field. Each commander felt that if they once fought without cover for either, there could be but one result, and that irreversible; while, behind entrenchments, the tactical odds were immensely in favor of Lee. These odds, no offensive opportunity, however brilliant, could tempt the rebel general to abandon, or even to imperil.

On the 2nd of June, Wilson returned from Hanover junction; having accomplished his errand of destruction to the railways, and made a demonstration on Burnside's right, he was ready now for any combined action with the main army. His movements had also been intended to prevent communication between Lee and the rebel forces in the Valley of Virginia. Since Breckenridge had joined Lee, Grant hoped great things from Hunter's army, which would be almost unopposed. At the same time, he was anxious lest, advancing too far into the interior, Hunter might be suddenly struck by a force detached from Lee, and suffer seriously. While, therefore, Grant strove to compel the concentration in his own front of all the rebel strength in Virginia, he sought at the same time to prevent any important communication between Lee and his subordinates in the Valley. His solicitude was wise, but not so necessary, perhaps, as he feared. At this juncture, Lee judged, rightly, that all his forces were required to oppose Grant, and the Valley remained bare in Hunter's path. Thus, amid all the anxieties of the campaign on the Chickahominy, the national chief was obliged to consider and direct the movements of his lieutenants beyond the mountains, hundreds of miles away: his



only line of communication with Hunter, at this time, was by way of Washington.

While Wilson's division was assuming its position on the right wing of the national army, Sheridan, with the remainder of the cavalry, was still on the opposite flank, holding the lower crossings of the Chickahominy, and the White House road. He reported the river low, and the swamps dry; everything favorable to a crossing. For Grant was constantly looking to this contingency; he meant to make one more attempt to break Lee's line, and if this should not succeed, to transfer his army once more by the left flank, and this time to the south side of the James.\*

On the afternoon of the 2nd, Lee detected again the massing of the national army on Grant's left, and moved his own forces again to correspond. Breckenridge's command and two divisions of Hill were now placed on the rebel right, Hoke and Anderson had the centre, while Early's corps and Heth's division formed the new left. The rebel line reached from New Cold Harbor to the Totopotomoy, about six miles. Grant's line was somewhat longer; his right, under Burnside, lay near Bethesda church, refused; then came Warren, Smith, and Wright, in the order named; while Hancock held the left, at and beyond Old Cold Harbor. Sheridan guarded the Chickahominy and the left flank, and Wilson the right, as we

\* "General Grant's present design is to crowd the rebel army south of the Chickahominy; then he means to thoroughly destroy both the railroads up to the South Anna, *before he moves from here*; besides, he wishes to keep the enemy so engaged here that he can detach no troops to interfere with the operations of Hunter."—*Dana*, 5 P.M., June 1.

have seen. To give time for these dispositions, the assault was postponed till morning. Thus Lee followed closely every initiative of Grant, never himself assuming one ; and Grant made sure that every step should not only be in the direction of the enemy in his front, but at the same time facilitate the eventual passage of the James, whenever Hunter's situation allowed that step.

All night of the 1st and all day of the 2nd of June, the rebels were busily engaged in strengthening their position. One great encounter had already occurred on this very field, in McClellan's Peninsula campaign ; and, to many in both armies, the battle of Gaines's Mill had made the ground familiar, although to Grant it was unknown. The strangeness of the incidents of war is singularly illustrated by the fact that, when the national and rebel forces contended on this same field, two years before, Lee held the position facing Richmond, which Grant had now assumed ; and McClellan, that in which the rebels, in 1864, entrenched themselves. The very works that still remained were used again by the two armies, but the position of the troops and the object of the fortifications were exactly reversed. In 1862, it was Lee who took the offensive, and the national army that was attacked. The rebel chief must have remembered this with bitter distinctness, when he stood upon the same ground, under circumstances so changed. Then, he came out far away from his entrenchments, and attacked an army greater in numbers than Grant commanded ; now, he was cooped up behind breast-works which he dared not leave, and remained on the defensive when the most enticing chances of war presented themselves. Was it indeed a difference

in the national commanders that the great rebel recognized? Did the spirit of the newer chief dominate that of his antagonist? Or was it a presentiment of Fate, like that in the Greek tragedy, that oppressed the hero, and substituted for the splendid, daring and impetuosity for which he had once been known, a stubborn fortitude, a patient strategy, a magnanimous endurance, great indeed in themselves, but all unlike the spirit he had shown at Chancellorsville, at Malvern, and at Gaines's Mill?

But this more than Fabian strategy, this unyielding fortitude which battled even when hope was gone; this penetrating vision, which foresaw the inevitable end, but also the means to postpone that end—all these were yet unconquered, even if doomed. Lee was still not cowed. Like a wounded lion, he doubtless felt that he was being driven closer and closer to his lair, but he determined to fight as long as a chance not of victory, but of escape remained. His object now was to tire out his enemy: he had no hope of overcoming, or of exhausting Grant or his armies, but he might weary the nation that supported and supplied those armies; he might entangle his adversary in the swamps which had been so fatal to his predecessor; he might still keep up the spirit of his own devoted soldiers, than whom no better ever fought; he might for a while longer defer the downfall of his cause. So, he omitted none of the defensive efforts of which he was so great a master, and in which alone he trusted now; he put all his wonderful skill in strategy into endeavors to bring Grant into situations where the national army must attack against all odds; he once more strengthened every



breastwork and brought up every man, and made ready for another battle north of the James.

A mile and a half west of Old Cold Harbor, on the Richmond road, there rises a long low hill, extending on the south almost to the Chickahominy, where it terminates abruptly in an impassable morass; on the northern side the slope is broken by ravines, but towards Old Cold Harbor, it is gradual and long. On this ridge the rebel right was formed, the crest constituting a natural parapet, while a sunken road, immediately outside the breastworks, answered all the purposes of an entrenchment. Protected thus by swamps on one side and ravines on the other, and with a sunken road in front, the position was quite as formidable as any assumed by the rebels during the entire campaign. Further to the north, in front of Lee's centre and left, the ground was more level, though still interrupted by swamps and rough gullies, often quite impassable. The approach was also impeded by natural thickets, and timber was slashed and abatis constructed, all along the line. At every point complete advantage had been taken of the natural circumstances of the ground; everywhere the enemy was absolutely covered, and the assailants were exposed to the full force of the rebel fire.

Grant's principal attack, it has already been seen, was to be made against the rebel right. Hancock, Wright, and Smith, using the ground gained on the 1st as a starting-point, were ordered to advance in force; while Warren, on the right of Smith, was to co-operate, more by way of a distraction than with any view of bringing on heavy battle in his front, for his line was nearly four miles long. Burnside, on the extreme right, was, originally, not directed

to attack at all, but to hold his command massed, and in readiness either to support Warren, if hard pressed, or to resist any attempt of the enemy to turn the right flank of the army;\* for Grant thought it not

\* "The Major-General commanding directs that you withdraw as soon as you can so securely, and mass in the rear of the right of General Warren, and be prepared to resist an attempt of the enemy to attack or turn his right flank, and also to support General Warren in any part of the line he is holding, upon his requiring it. The Commanding General desires me to say that the defence of the right of the line is entrusted to yourself and General Warren, and that there should be mutual co-operation. . ."—*Humphreys (Meade's chief of staff) to Burnside, June 2, 7 A.M.*

"The Major-General commanding directs me to say that General Burnside is ordered to withdraw as soon as he can, securely, and mass in rear of your right, and be prepared to resist an attempt of the enemy to attempt or turn it; and also to support you in any part of the line you are holding. The Commanding General directs me to say that the defence of the right is entrusted to General Burnside and yourself, and that there should be mutual co-operation."—*Humphreys to Warren, June 2, 7.30 A.M.*

"The Major-General commanding directs . . . that your front should be such that one-half of your force may be available for contingencies. You will notify General Burnside of this and act simultaneously with him. He will receive orders to move so as to keep massed in the rear of your right."—*Humphreys to Warren, 9 A.M.*

"General Warren is ordered to close the interval between himself and General Smith, about one mile, and also to contract his line so as to hold one half of his force available. The Commanding General directs that you move simultaneously with General Warren, so as to keep massed in rear of his right, prepared to support General Warren, meet an attempt to turn his right flank, or for any other contingency."—*Humphreys to Burnside, 9 A.M.*

These orders were repeated at 9.30 A.M.: at 1.30, the following despatch was sent to both Warren and Burnside: "The Major-General commanding wishes to know what progress you have made in the change of position ordered this morning, and at what time you will be posted as directed."

impossible that Lee, in order to divert attention, or to relieve his own right, the key-point of the battle, might assault Burnside or Warren. These, we have seen, were Grant's own tactics, whenever he was himself assailed; not only to resist at the threatened point, but to make a counter-assault elsewhere; and he gave his adversary credit for equal astuteness and audacity. His own attention, however, had now been concentrated on the left for days, and here he had put into line, within forty-eight hours, the Sixth, the Eighteenth,\* and the Second corps. These troops had all rested, and it was they who were to make the attempt to break Lee's line.

The operations of the enemy against Warren and Burnside caused, however, a modification of this plan. Up to a late hour on the 2nd, the orders had been positive that Warren's advance should be merely co-operative, and that Burnside was to hold himself in reserve, and in readiness for the contingencies of the battle. But when, as we have seen, Early was discovered to be in force in front of the

Somewhat later, the following order was communicated to each of these commanders: "I am instructed to inform you that the attack by Generals Hancock, Smith, and Wright ordered for this morning, will take place at five o'clock this afternoon. The Commanding General directs that General Warren co-operate by attacking in his front, and that his available force and the corps of Major-General Burnside be held ready to co-operate in such manner as may be required."

At 4 P.M., Warren was told: "The Major-General commanding wishes you to hold the right, and Major-General Burnside to be massed in rear of your right."

\* Smith's command was really composed of portions of the Tenth as well as the Eighteenth corps, but while it was separated from Butler, it was commonly known as the Eighteenth.



national right, both Warren and Burnside were directed to attack in the morning, "in such manner and with such combinations as their judgment dictated." "If the enemy should appear to be in strongest force on our left, and your attack should in consequence prove successful, you must follow it up, closing in upon them towards our left. If, on the contrary, the attack on the left should be successful, it will be followed up, moving towards our right."\* Wilson, with one division of cavalry, was also directed to attack the enemy in flank and rear, in conjunction with Warren and Burnside. Thus, if Lee had any intention of distracting Grant, his manœuvre failed; the movement of Early did not divert the national commander one hour from his design, nor subtract one man from those intended for the assault on the rebel right.

The broken character of the ground, and the thick copsewood, which not only obstructed the advance, but obscured the view, made it impossible to ascertain where the rebel lines were weakest, except by actual assault; and corps commanders were necessarily left to select their own immediate points of attack, and to form their divisions as circumstances might determine. What Grant laid down in advance was—the position each should hold in the general line of battle, and the fact that the principal attack was to be made on the left, while that of the two corps on the right was to be subordinate, and in fact dependent upon the other operations of the day.

\* This change in the orders to Warren and Burnside was made by Meade, after consulting Grant, before midnight of the 2nd; the despatch will be found in full in the Appendix.

At half-past four A.M., on the 3rd of June, the columns on the left moved to the assault. Hancock sent Barlow and Gibbon forward, supporting them by Birney; Barlow, in two deployed lines, Gibbon, with his first line deployed, and the second in close column of regiments. The morning mists still hung over the swamps, baffling the vision, and making the greater number of the assailants simply a larger target for the enemy's fire;\* the men sank in the morasses, or became entangled in the brush-wood, or were delayed by their endeavors to avoid these obstacles; but Barlow pushed on, under a storm of musketry and cannon fire, till he came upon the rebels strongly posted in the sunken road outside their works. They struggled hard, but his impetus was irresistible; he drove them from the road and followed into the entrenchments, capturing several hundred prisoners and three pieces of artillery. The guns were turned at once upon the enemy, who fled in great confusion from this portion of the line. But this success was destined to be short-lived. The second line failed to come up promptly in support of the advance; and the rebels rallying, and reinforced, soon brought to bear an enfilading artillery fire, under cover of which Barlow was forced back out of the captured works. His troops, however, were magnificently obstinate; and taking advantage of a slight crest, not fifty yards from the rebel line, they covered themselves in this advanced

\* Much of the supposed advantage of numbers is a moral one, where the ground held by the enemy does not permit his flanks to be turned. No more than a certain number of men can be stretched in line across a certain space, and to mass more heavily only presents a closer mark to the hostile fire.

position, with rifle-pits dug under heavy fire ; and here they remained.

Gibbon, on Barlow's right, found his advance not only interrupted by ravines, but divided by a deep impassable morass, which widened as he reached the enemy's works. The command nevertheless pushed gallantly forward, officer after officer falling in front of his men, who seemed inspired by the superb example, and struggled on against a blinding storm of musketry and artillery, that fell like hail ; stunned, or beaten down for a moment, they halted more than once, but instantly recovered themselves,\* and rushed upon the works, though in thinned and scattered lines. One officer, Colonel McMahan, of a New York regiment, though separated from his brigade by the swamp, yet gained the breastworks with a portion of his command, and while cheering his men by the side of his colors, fell, mortally wounded, and expired in the hands of the enemy, thus glorifying defeat by valor. A portion of another brigade also reached the works, but being unsupported, was unable to remain : Owen's brigade, in the second line, had been ordered to push on in column, over the front line, and not deploy until it reached the works ; but instead of this, Owen deployed on the left, as soon as the troops in his front became engaged, and thus was unable to support the lodgment made by the

\* Those who have been in battle know that the test of troops is—not their willingness to rush blindly into a charge, but their ability to recover themselves and continue a movement under fire, when once the advance has been checked, and the first impetus, physical and moral, has been lost. The officers or men who then proceed, are soldiers.



advance. Gibbon, however, made several other attempts to carry the works, but although now so near the enemy, he succeeded no better than in the earlier assault. Some portions of his command, nevertheless, got so far forward, and were subjected to so close a fire, that it was only possible to extricate themselves by taking advantage of the inequalities of the ground. Protected by these, they constructed covered ways, through which they made a passage back to the front of the army. But the wounded and the dead could not be removed.

The Sixth corps was also drawn up in two lines, and advanced at the same time with Hancock. The assault was vigorous, and Wright succeeded in gaining a line of rifle-pits belonging to rebel skirmishers, but made no impression on the principal works, though his men behaved with a gallantry equal to any displayed this day.\*

In front of Smith, was an open plain, swept by the fire of the enemy, both direct and from the right. Towards the left, the interval was narrower, but still covered by the rebel artillery. Near the centre, however, a ravine opened, in which the troops could be sheltered at least from the cross fire, and through this ravine Smith determined to make his main assault. Deven's division was placed on the right, towards Warren, to protect that flank; Martindale was ordered to move down the ravine; and Brooks was to advance on the left, taking care to keep up the connection between Martindale and the Sixth corps; and, if, in the advance, the two commanders

\* It has already been stated that neither Wright nor Warren made any report of their operations during this campaign.

should come in contact, Brooks was ordered to throw his men behind Martindale, and be ready to operate on the right flank, if necessary.

The corps moved promptly at the appointed hour, driving in the rebel skirmishers, and carrying the first line of rifle-pits. Here, the command was halted under a severe fire, to readjust the lines; and Smith now discovered that he must face his line of battle to the right, in order to protect that flank, and that a further advance was quite impracticable, until the Sixth corps could come up to cover his left. Martindale was accordingly ordered to keep his column covered, and not to move until Brooks was ready to advance. But Martindale mistook the firing in front of the Sixth corps for that of Brooks, and supposing his own left to be covered, three times advanced and assaulted with great gallantry, but being without the expected support, he was each time repulsed with loss. This attack brought a heavy cross fire, from the right, on Brooks, who was obliged to order his men to seek shelter until it was over. Smith was now quite unable to silence the enfilading fire, and sent word to Meade, that he had no hope of carrying the works, unless a movement of Wright should relieve at least one of his flanks from this galling fire.

Wright had just reported that he was waiting for Smith's advance, and, accordingly, both corps were again ordered to assault. Smith's command had already been very much cut up in the first advance, and while holding the ground gained under the terrible cross fire; but a new column of assault was formed. The rebels on his right held a strong position, with no force in their immediate

front ; they were, therefore, at liberty to play on Smith's advance with a severe flank fire, that went through the entire width of his line and into the right of the Sixth corps. Smith did what was possible to silence this fire with artillery, but could not prevent it from being very destructive. At eleven o'clock, he announced to Meade that his last four regiments were formed for the attack, but wrote : " I dare not order it, till I see more hopes of success, either by Warren's attack or otherwise."

Warren had his whole command in a single line, and, covering so long an extent, he was necessarily unable to make any effectual assault. He advanced, nevertheless, and captured a few rifle-pits from the rebel skirmishers, but the main works in his front remained intact.

The Ninth corps had been massed in the rear of Warren, with Potter's division on the right, Wilcox on the left, and Crittenden in reserve ; but in attacking, Burnside moved out and stretched his corps some distance to the right, driving the rebels out of a line of entrenchments they had captured the day before, and forcing them back into their main works. In this advance, Griffin's division of the Fifth corps co-operated very efficiently with Wilcox of the Ninth, until both were checked by a heavy enfilading fire. The command was then halted until artillery could be placed in position to protect its further progress, and if possible silence the enemy.

Thus, all along the front, the advance had been made ; and on the left, the assaults had been repeated, and yet had failed. The line was everywhere pushed closer to the enemy, but the rebel works were nowhere carried. Only in Hancock's front



had the troops succeeded in forcing an entrance, and there they had been expelled, bringing out, however, two hundred prisoners and one color, as trophies of their transient victory. But if Lee had repulsed the national assaults, he had nowhere ventured outside his works to take advantage of the situation, although his loss must have been comparatively small. The condition of the troops in Hancock, Wright, and Smith's commands, after throwing themselves repeatedly against the breastworks, and while they lay close under the rebel guns, exhausted and repelled, was one to invite a sortie, if a sortie was ever to be made; but Lee did not attempt to reap any results from what was a rebuff indeed to Grant, but only a negative success for the enemy. Not a rebel fought outside the defences, either during or after the assault.

The earlier reports to Grant made the number of killed and wounded not greater than three thousand, and the fact that Hancock had penetrated the rebel lines, although afterwards he was thrust out, and that all the other corps commanders had carried rifle-pits, while the line was everywhere definitely advanced—all seemed to show that more might yet be done. Grant never abandoned a design because at the first it failed; and orders were given to the various commanders to renew the assault whenever good opportunity offered, and the troops were in condition to advance. At seven A.M., Grant said to Meade: "The moment it becomes certain that an assault cannot succeed, suspend the offensive, but when one does succeed, push it vigorously, and if necessary, pile in troops at the successful point, from wherever they can be taken." Hancock had not

waited for these orders, but assaulted again on his own responsibility.\* Wright and Smith also pushed on, but no serious advantage was gained, nor was there any important combined assault after the fighting of the early morning. Flashes of battle struck out here and there, but the great conflagration had spent its force.

The despatches sent in by corps commanders were conflicting, and at eleven o'clock, Grant rode out in person along the lines, to consult his generals. Hancock reported that in his front the works could not be carried; Wright was decidedly of opinion that a lodgment could be made in his front, but that nothing would be gained by it, unless Hancock and Smith were also to advance. Smith thought he might carry the works before him, but was not sanguine. Burnside also thought he could make his way through, but Warren, who was nearest him, did not share in this opinion.† Accordingly, at 12.30 P.M., Grant issued the following orders to Meade: "The opinions of the corps commanders not being sanguine of success in case an assault is ordered, you may direct a suspension of further advance for the present. *Hold our most advanced positions*, and strengthen them. Whilst on the defensive, our line may be contracted from the right, if practicable. Reconnoissances should be made in front of every corps, and advances made to advantageous positions by regular approaches.‡ To aid the expedition of General

\* See note to page 300.

† Dana to Stanton, June 3.

‡ I invite especial attention to what Grant says of his anxiety in regard to Hunter, because ignorant writers finding the words "regular approaches" in Hancock's report, have rushed at once

Hunter it is necessary that we should detain all the army now with Lee, until the former gets well on his way to Lynchburg. To do this effectually, *it will be better to keep the enemy out of the entrenchments of Richmond*, than to have them go back there. *Wright and Hancock should be ready to assault*, in case the enemy should break through General Smith's lines, and all should be ready to resist an assault." But no rebel assault was made. Grant, however, was prepared not only to resist, but with his usual tactics, to attack, even with those corps which had suffered most severely. Even at this supreme moment, while it was yet uncertain whether the enemy, flushed with success, would not come out in force against the exhausted, bleeding soldiers of the national army, their commander was not only arranging to attack the rebels in turn, but was directing the movements of his troops in the Valley of Virginia, and planning to detain the enemy outside of the fortifications of Richmond. Most generals would have been content on that day to have seen their antagonist withdraw.

But it was not only Hunter whom Grant was considering. At two P.M., he sent a despatch to Halleck, announcing the result of the battle, and at three, another, with instructions in regard to Banks's command in Louisiana, and advising a movement against Mobile. Halleck had proposed to reinforce Grant with the Nineteenth corps, but the general-

to the conclusion that Grant meant to besiege Richmond from Cold Harbor. The object of the regular approaches, as the despatch shows, was to detain Lee outside of Richmond, not to drive him in; and in this strategy Grant succeeded so completely that, years afterwards, the rebel apologists had not discovered the ruse.



in-chief replied: "I do not think it advisable to bring the Nineteenth corps to this field. . . . If there are any surplus troops West, they could be advantageously used against Mobile." So far from calling for fresh soldiers, he rejected those that were pressed upon him ; so far from being crushed or cast down, he busied himself in the intervals of the battle of Cold Harbor, with arranging the organization of the Sixteenth corps in West Tennessee, and directing the repairs of a railroad from the White House to his army.\*

As soon as the order suspending the assault was issued, the troops were put under cover, and the front line was strengthened. With the exception of Hancock, each corps commander held all the ground that he had gained, and Hancock remained at the points immediately outside the rebel works, which his men had seized in the very moment of repulse, and clung to with the tenacity of death itself. The national lines were soon made nearly as impregnable as those which had been assailed ; for in this long series of battles from the Rapidan to the James, Grant's soldiers were constantly entrenched, as well as Lee's ; the difference was that the rebels did not assault. Artillery firing continued all the afternoon, and the sharpshooters kept up their fire along the entire line ; but the only fighting after mid-day was in front of Burnside.

The Ninth corps had really made more progress than any other portion of the army ; and Burnside's dispositions for a further advance were all arranged. He had suggested to Wilson, on his right, to move

\* Grant to Halleck, June 3.

from the opposite side of the Totopotomoy, and attack the enemy in rear; and his own orders to advance were already given, when the command to suspend offensive operations arrived. Wilson, however, had turned the enemy's left and taken a number of prisoners, before he became aware of the change of orders. Early in the afternoon, the rebels opened a furious fusillade on the right of Burnside, under cover of which they attempted to haul off their batteries by means of prolonges, but were prevented by Potter's fire. During the night, they withdrew from Burnside's front, leaving their dead unburied, and some of their wounded on the field.\*

The national soldiers never fought more splendidly than on this day.† The loss in officers was

\* Potter's Report.

† Nevertheless, it has been asserted that the battle of Cold Harbor was decided in ten minutes, and that after the first assault, the troops of the army of the Potomac refused to move, when their officers gave the command.

The fact is that the fighting was renewed again and again. At 5.15 A.M., Meade announced to Grant: "General Barlow reports that he has enemy's works with colors and guns." At 5.30: "Hancock reports Barlow could not hold the works carried, but has retired a short distance and is about *assaulting again*. *Gibbon advancing*, and near the works." At 7 A.M.: "Reports from Wright announce *some progress*. His advance occupies a line of the enemy's pits, I presume their skirmish line. He reports the Eighteenth corps having occupied the same line, but retiring. His (Wright's) line is *pushing on*. No report from Smith. I sent you one from Hancock, reporting *he was about attempting another assault, written before my order to him to do so had reached him*. I should be glad to have your views as to the *continuance* of these efforts, if unsuccessful." At 8.30 A.M., information was sent to Warren by Meade: "Generals Wright, Hancock, and Smith have taken the advanced rifle-pits of the enemy, and are expected to continue their

terribly severe. The second corps alone lost six colonels and one brigadier-general; Devens, commanding a division in the Eighteenth corps, was carried about the field on a stretcher, from which assaults, *which they are now doing.*" At 10 A.M., Humphreys wrote to Warren: "The Major-General Commanding *is gratified to hear of your success*, and directs me to say *we are pushing on here*, and that he desires you to do the same, as long as there is any chance of success." To Burnside, Humphreys wrote at the same hour: "*We are pushing on here.*" Hancock, Smith, Burnside, Gibbon, Potter, in their reports, all speak of *repeated* assaults: Wright and Warren made no reports. Finally, Lee, who ought to have known, wrote thus to Jefferson Davis: "*Repeated attacks* were made upon General Anderson's position. They were met with great steadiness and repulsed in *every instance*. The attack extended to our extreme left, under General Early, with like results. Later in the day, it was *twice renewed.*" So much for the assertion that the battle was decided in ten minutes, and that there was but one assault.

The uniform testimony as to the gallantry of the troops on this occasion refutes at once the odious calumny that they refused to obey, when ordered to assault. There was no general order for assault, subsequent to the first attack, but, as has been abundantly shown, both Grant and Meade directed commanders to take advantage of any success. Hancock, like the splendid soldier that he was, assaulted without orders, when he found the opportunity. At seven, Grant said: "The moment it becomes certain that an assault cannot succeed, suspend the offensive;" and Meade wrote to Hancock at 7.30, "I desire every effort to be made to carry the enemy's works. Of course, if this is deemed impracticable after trial, the attack should be suspended, but the responsibility for this must be on your judgment. I cannot give you more decided orders." Warren and Burnside were likewise ordered, at 10 A.M., to push on their attacks, "as long as there is any chance of success;" and Dana's despatch, incorporated with the text (page 297), is proof of the feeling of the corps commanders at noon. No intelligence was communicated to Grant at the time, or has been since, that any of the troops refused to assault. I have made extensive inquiries among the subordinate commanders most actively engaged, all of whom resent the outrageous imputation upon their gallant soldiers.



he issued his orders ; and private soldiers everywhere vied with their commanders. The entire national loss, in killed, wounded, and missing, was about seven thousand.\* No return of Lee's losses is in existence, if any was ever made, and every statement in regard to them is based upon conjecture only. As the rebels did not once come out from cover, it is probable that their loss was not greater than twenty-five hundred, a proportion not unusual in such assaults. Grant had about one hundred thousand men engaged, and Lee, probably, eighty thousand.†

In regard to this battle, Grant said in his report : " On the 3rd of June, we again assaulted the

\* On the 3rd of June, Dana reported the loss at 3,000, and, on the 4th, he said : " Adjutant-General Williams reports to me that our entire losses in killed, wounded, and missing, during the three days' operations around Cold Harbor, will not exceed seven thousand five hundred." Later and accurate investigations in the War Office, based upon the regimental returns, show that the losses from the 31st of May to the 12th of June, were 10,058. Of these 1,769 were killed, 6,752 wounded, and 1,537 missing. At least 3,000 must be deducted, for the battles of the 31st of May, at Bethesda church, and of the 1st and 2nd of June, and for the losses during the week subsequent to the great assault ; so that the statement in the text is confirmed.

† After the 1st of May, no field return was made of the army of the Potomac, until the 20th of June ; and none by Lee is in existence earlier than June 30th. On the 20th, Meade reported 79,554 men present for duty equipped : to this should be added 20,000 to cover Smith's command, and the losses of the 3rd of June and before Petersburg during the month. On the 30th, Lee reported 51,863 effective, exclusive of Early's corps, 12,000 ; Hampton's cavalry, reported by Lee at 2,888 ; Dearing's brigade, which I estimate at 1,000 ; and a portion of the artillery, also estimated at 1,000 : all these troops were engaged in the battle of Cold Harbor ; as well as the garrison of Richmond, officially reported at the same date, at 6,176. Lee's losses on the 3rd of June, and during the month before Petersburg, cannot have been less than 5,000.

enemy's works, in the hope of driving him from his position. In this attempt our loss was heavy, while that of the enemy, I have reason to believe, was comparatively light. It was the only general attack made, from the Rapidan to the James, which did not inflict upon the enemy losses to compensate for our own." Lee reported: "Our loss to-day has been small, and our success, under the blessing of God, all that we could expect." His expectations must have been negative indeed; for the national army, at that very time, was entrenching half a mile nearer the rebel line than in the morning.

When Grant reached New Cold Harbor, he had driven and manœuvred and fought the rebel army steadily back from the Rapidan, for thirty days, and now found himself in front of the very outworks of Richmond; for the Chickahominy served in reality as a wet ditch, outside the fortifications of the capital. The result that would have followed from breaking and routing the rebel army here, would have been worth all it could have cost; and only by hard fighting at the critical moments have decisive battles been won. Grant had seized strategical points, withdrawn his own army from dangerous situations, often rendered Lee's advantages of no avail, and dictated movements to his adversary again and again. But the destruction of Lee was not to be accomplished by manœuvring alone. Grant's manœuvres were all—not to avoid the necessity of fighting, but to secure a position in which he could fight to advantage. If, however, the circumstances of the country and of the campaign, and the skill with which Lee availed himself of these, combined to foil this purpose, Grant yet must fight, even at a disadvantage, or lose the game.

This was not all : if he had withdrawn from the north side of Richmond without an assault, after the month of battles it cost him to reach that point, Grant would not only have acted contrary to his own judgment, and proved false to every instinct of his own nature, but must certainly have weakened his hold on the army and the country, as well as greatly encouraged the enemy. He had carried works at Donelson and Chattanooga, when the difficulties seemed as insuperable as now ; the rebel line had been broken at the Wilderness, and at Spottsylvania, in this very campaign, when the circumstances were no more propitious ; and only two days before, Lee had been driven out of Old Cold Harbor. The rebels, Grant believed to be enfeebled by their long retreat, their frequent battles, their constant marches, and the depressing influence of incessant defence. His own men were apparently within reach of what they had been so long striving to attain, and would hardly have been content to begin a siege, if the assault had not been tried. These considerations decided him. The prize was great, and any soldier of Grant's type, any great offensive general, having advanced so far, would have essayed to carry the works at New Cold Harbor.\*

While both strategical and moral reasons thus justified the assault, every tactical consideration indicated the point where it should be made. Had the rebel right been crushed, Lee's army would have been entirely cut off from Richmond, or driven back in such

\* Napoleon at Heilsberg, Wellington at Badajos, Von Moltke at Gravelottes, each made as desperate assaults, and though they each failed in the immediate purpose, yet, afterwards, each attained his end ; and to the accomplishment of that end, the earlier assault contributed.



confusion that the capital must have fallen. Three corps were therefore massed against the rebel right; Hancock, Wright, and Smith so placed that they might be fairly hoped to destroy or turn that flank; while Warren and Burnside were ordered, in case of success on Grant's left, to swing around in that direction, and follow up, attacking Lee's centre. The earlier events of the battle fully justified these dispositions: Hancock absolutely penetrated the rebel right, and carried the key-point of the field; and it was only the failure of his second line to come up promptly, or rather his own failure to complete his own success, which, as at the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, enabled the rebels to retake the position they had lost, and stem the tide. The attention of the enemy being thus concentrated on the left, Burnside was able, as Grant anticipated, to advance on the right, and with a little more promptitude, would doubtless have doubled up that wing on the rebel centre. The only cause of the repulse was that, behind entrenchments, Lee's gallant soldiers were almost invincible. But no position could ever be stormed, no lines ever carried, if commanders took it for granted, in advance, that success was impossible.

Grant, however, was repelled, not defeated. He still kept the rebels behind their works, and deprived them of anything like offensive victory. Lee was no more likely to succeed in the end, because of Cold Harbor. He had held off his enemy this once more; but he knew too well that the encounter must be repeated, and the struggle just as severe, when his own army would be less able to endure. Cold Harbor, indeed, must not be con-

sidered alone. It was one of a series of terrible blows which Grant was dealing the rebel army ; and if, of itself, it produced no immediate offensive result, yet, coming after the shocks which had preceded, it assisted to shake the rebellion. Looked upon as a part of the unceasing play of the hammer, by which Grant was crushing the military force of his enemy, this also had its use, this also did its part. The simple fact that, after the assault, Lee dared not come out and take advantage of the situation, shows that Cold Harbor was not fought in vain.

On the 5th of June, two days after the battle, Grant wrote to Halleck : " I find after thirty days of trial—the enemy deem it of the first importance to run no risks with the armies they now have. They act purely on the defensive behind breastworks, or feebly on the offensive immediately in front of them, and where, in case of repulse, they can instantly retire behind them. . . . The feeling of the two armies seems to be, that the rebels can protect themselves only by strong entrenchments, whilst our army is not only confident of protecting itself without entrenchments, but that it can beat and drive the enemy, wherever and whenever he can be found without this protection." These were the feelings and sentiments with which the battle of Cold Harbor inspired the national general, and with which he believed it had inspired his army.

In all the preliminary movements of this battle Lee had displayed his usual qualities ; he watched his antagonist as closely and as warily as one wild beast does another before the final spring ; he followed the movements of his adversary skilfully ; he put forth his own feelers ; he thwarted many of Grant's

attempts: but, as usual, he left every great aggressive opportunity unseized. He was fully informed of the approach of Smith from the White House, and must have been aware of the exposed nature of the march. All day on the 30th of May, Grant was prepared to resist such an attack as he himself would have made; for, had he been in Lee's position, he certainly would have attempted to crush Smith on his lonely road; but Lee by this time knew his antagonist too well, and thought it more prudent to withstand attacks behind substantial works, giving the national commander all the risk, and securing for himself all the protection possible. No disparity of numbers can account for this timidity. The most prudent of generals would have justified him in attacking a small and isolated corps.

Still more remarkable was his failure to seize and retain Old Cold Harbor, the real strategic position of the whole vicinity. Having fought over these very fields two years before; already on the ground, with his whole force within reach, while Grant was miles away; he yet suffered his enemy to snatch from him the point, the possession of which not only secured Grant's line to his base at White House and the road by which Smith was marching, but enabled the national commander to cross both the Chickahominy and the James, at any point east of the rebel army. No better proof of the negative character of Lee's genius can be adduced than his failure to perceive, or at any rate to appropriate, the advantages which the possession of Old Cold Harbor would have secured.



The absolute battle, on the 3rd of June, was, however, well fought by the rebel commander; the night movements were well conceived and rapidly executed; the proper positions selected, and secured, and fortified; and the utmost possible use was made of them. Lee's training as an engineer always came in play in these defensive operations, and perhaps in some degree accounted for his failure in offensive ones, for his lack of dash, and his preference for the inside of entrenchments. On this occasion he used his men behind their works so as to repel the best troops that Grant could bring against them; but it needed no special military skill for this, no wonderful *coup d'œil*, no sudden flash of genius. The time for all these traits was when the national soldiers fell back from the assault; and then, as always in such emergencies, Lee failed conspicuously. He restrained his soldiers within their fortifications, even after successful defence, while the national army was still outside of cover, and in all the disturbed condition of the best of troops when assault has failed. Grant was far from his base, and that was a water one; if Lee had dared come out at once to cut off the national army there, every one of the chances of war was in his favor. But he did not dare.

Thus, at the close of the day, Grant was nearer Lee's lines than at the beginning, and the rebel army and capital were hemmed in together. Nothing can more clearly show the effect of the whole campaign upon the two commanders, than this simple fact; nothing more absolutely demonstrates the real success of Grant's strategy from the Rapidan. After thirty days of fighting, he suffered the only rebuff of the campaign which he considered uncom-

pensated; and the consequence was that Lee remained behind his works, and Grant began his preparations for another advance.\*

\* After the battle of Cold Harbor, the hostile lines were so near each other that the wounded between the armies could not be brought away, on either side, without exposure to the opposite fire. When this was reported to Grant, he at once proposed to Lee that "either be authorized to send to any point between the pickets or skirmish lines, unarmed men bearing litters, to pick up the dead or wounded, without being fired upon by the other party. Any other method equally fair to both parties you may propose for meeting the end desired, will be accepted by me." Lee, however, "feared such an arrangement would lead to misunderstanding and difficulty," and proposed that "in future, when either party desires to remove their dead and wounded, a flag of truce be sent as customary." Grant at once wrote back: "I will send immediately as you propose, to collect the dead and wounded between the lines of the two armies; and will also instruct that you be allowed to do the same. . . . I will direct all parties going out to bear a white flag, and not to attempt to go beyond, or on ground occupied by your troops." Lee now expressed his regret that he had not made himself understood in his previous communication. "I intended to say that I could not consent to the burial of the dead and removal of the wounded between the armies in the way you proposed, but that when either army desires such permission, it should be asked for by flag of truce, in the usual way. Until I receive a proposition from you on the subject, to which I can accede with propriety, *I have directed any parties you may send under white flags, as mentioned in your letter, to be turned back.*" This was of course to compel Grant to "ask permission" to remove his dead and wounded, and then parade the request as proof of a rebel victory. Grant, however, was not used to such devices, and cared nothing for them. Gallant soldiers of both armies were lingering in pain, under the blazing sun of June, and he replied, without delay: "The knowledge that wounded men are now suffering from want of attention, between the two armies, compels me to ask a suspension of hostilities for sufficient time to collect them in, say two hours. . . . The same privilege will be extended to such parties as you may wish to send out on the same duty, without further application." Lee's answer, acceding to

It has already been shown that, at the beginning of the campaign, Grant selected the route from the Rapidan, rather than that by the James, because, otherwise, he must have left Washington exposed. Lee could very well afford to exchange capitals; the moral and political effect upon the South and abroad, of the capture of Washington, would far more than compensate any loss he might himself sustain. And that the enemy would be quick to avail himself of this transcendent chance had already twice been shown. Washington, indeed, had been the original aim of the rebel commanders, and their first army at Manassas was assembled with the express object of moving against the national capital. Immediately, also, upon the failure of the Peninsula campaign and the retreat of McClellan, Lee turned to the North, and despite the opposition of Pope, advanced as far as Maryland; while, after Chancellorsville, he even penetrated to Pennsylvania. There was, therefore, no doubt in Grant's mind of the unwisdom of leaving the road open for a third invasion of the North. He sought, on the contrary, to close every avenue; he left Sigel men enough to guard the Valley, while he himself engrossed the attention of Lee, and thus

these terms and *availing himself of the privilege extended to his own army*, was delayed in the transmission; and it was not until the 7th, forty-eight hours after Grant's first application, that the suspension of hostilities occurred. Only two of the wounded were then alive, and Grant at last wrote, regretting that all his "efforts for alleviating the suffering of wounded men left upon the battlefield had been rendered nugatory." But Lee's *punctilio* was satisfied. Whether his military reputation gained sufficiently to compensate for the sufferings he deliberately and unnecessarily prolonged, is questionable.



prevented any possibility of a rebel advance beyond the Rapidan.

Had Butler played his part, the destruction of Lee might have been accomplished before either of the great armies reached the James. With Richmond or the railroads lost, and Sigel advancing in the Valley, Lee's supplies must have been entirely stopped. Caught then between Meade and Butler, he would have had no option left but battle, with all the advantages on the side of Grant—or instant retreat in the direction of North Carolina and Tennessee, when the blows the national commander so well knew how to deal a flying enemy would have consummated his ruin. All this, however, was frustrated by Butler's failure. Lee was not distracted by any disasters in his rear; his supplies were not stopped; on the contrary, reinforcements came to him from the Valley and the James, and the operations of the national commanders, on the right and left of Grant, absolutely contributed to the numerical strength of the enemy in his front.

But Grant had another reason for his choice of a route in this campaign, which was quite as powerful with him as the purely strategical one. It was Lee, and not Richmond, that he was aiming at, and Lee was in front of him. He preferred to begin the campaign by attacking the enemy at once, rather than move ninety miles away, in the hope that the enemy would follow him. His military ability, indeed, was always blended with peculiarities that can hardly be called professional. He was when most a soldier, never merely a soldier. He believed in moral as well as physical effects, and his own moral traits contributed to his success quite as much

as those which were purely intellectual. He not only saw and appreciated the strategical position of an enemy, with its advantages and defects; he not only took into account the genius or skill of his antagonist, and computed the numbers or considered the experience of the opposite army; but he calculated also the force and value of persistency, of audacity, of endurance; of that moral strength which is, if not the source, the supplement of physical courage; he trusted to the effect on his own soldiers and on those of the enemy—of continuous and bold attacks, of unceasing and direct fighting, face to face, man to man.

When he left Culpeper, therefore, the general-in-chief hoped and expected to find or make a chance to crush Lee's army by hard fighting, before reaching the James. This expectation, however, had been foiled by Lee's success in avoiding battle upon anything like equal terms; a success due, not only to the genius of the rebel chief and the valor of his soldiers, but also very greatly to the topographical features of the country, so admirably adapted for his purpose; to his own accurate and familiar knowledge of that topography, and the national unacquaintance with the region; to the shorter lines he had to traverse, the friendship of the inhabitants, and the superior mobility which all these causes combined to give the Southern army. He was thus enabled to frustrate every effort to bring him to battle in the open field, and at each successive move to interpose his army in a strong position, until he was finally driven to the long prepared defences of his capital. His inferiority in numbers, not half so marked as has been stated by partial friends, was far more than

neutralized by these advantages, and above all, by the certainty that under all circumstances, Grant must continue to attack, or abandon the campaign.

For Lee's policy never compelled him to attack. He gained his point when he held Grant off; and satisfied with this, he never, after the Wilderness, attempted to win advantage by a general assault. Grant, on the contrary, at the head of an invading army, striving to put down a rebellion, was constrained by every political and military consideration, to advance. He had no choice, but to fight, against every disadvantage. In each instance, after the Wilderness, after Spottsylvania, after the North Anna, the one movement necessary for the rebels was a simple change of front, and a retrograde march south; while Grant was obliged to give a great development to his left, in order to strike the same point which the enemy could reach in half the distance or the time. The national troops were, therefore, compelled to do double the marching of the enemy, and then, coming up fatigued and worn, to assault the rebels ensconced behind their formidable breastworks. It was thus that no foresight in design, no vigilance in execution, no rapidity in movement proved sufficient to secure to Grant the advantage of a surprise. On each occasion the march of the national army began in the night, and every precaution was taken to secure secrecy; but on each occasion Lee had frustrated the immediate purpose, interposing at the critical moment, to forestall the result, and making it necessary for Grant to attack, or resort again to his flanking operations.

But, as has been repeatedly explained, and this is the key to all his strategy, Grant was not making



a war of positions ; it was not the Wilderness, nor Spottsylvania, nor the North Anna river, nor Cold Harbor, which he was anxious to secure. The battle-field of North Anna, covering Hanover Junction, was the only intrinsically strategical position of them all ; the others received a temporary consequence from the relative situation of the two armies. It was Lee's soldiers that were Grant's objective point. For this reason, as we have seen, he had selected his route, and for this reason he did not avoid fighting, even when Lee was entrenched ; for this reason he made his assaults. He believed always that eventual success would be due to absolute fighting, rather than to the most skilful manœuvring. No manœuvring, however, is skilful which does not accomplish its object ; and Grant knew that to manœuvre the rebels out of Richmond, to force them unbeaten into the mountains of East Tennessee and North Carolina, would neither end the war nor destroy the army of Northern Virginia.

But that he did not underrate the importance of manœuvring at the proper time, that he was not ignorant of the means nor unskilful in the application of the highest strategy, the long series of flanking movements which he alternated with his battles are ample testimony. The man who devised the Vicksburg and Chattanooga campaigns had not degenerated when he forced the rebels out of their lines at the Wilderness, on the Po, the Ny, and the North Anna ; striking hard with one hand and with the other compelling a retrograde ; so that, time after time, Lee found all his advantages of position useless, all his elaborate fortifications unavailable, and himself compelled to evacuate his works and follow

the initiative of Grant, each time forced to seek a new line of defence, ominously nearer his capital.

Nor was Grant less alive in the turmoil of actual battle to the importance of tactical skill. Before every great encounter he had a definite plan, a distinct idea of what he wanted to accomplish. On the first day in the Wilderness, he anticipated Lee's assault; on the second, he massed the bulk of his army at the left, the key-point of the fight, disposing the remainder with a view to distract the enemy. At Spottsylvania, the evolutions were continuous for a week, but all inspired by the fluctuating emergencies of the field. At the North Anna, the advance on the right and left was planned so that the rebel centre might be crushed. At Cold Harbor, half the army was massed for a particular object. Not all these objects were attained, but the repetition shows how constantly Grant sought to bring his strength to bear upon what he deemed either the most important, or the most accessible point of the enemy's position. His reserves, his feints, his massing are all set forth in the orders issued before each battle; while when once engaged, he constantly strove by counter-attack elsewhere to relieve any portion of his own force too hotly pressed. No commander made use of this manœuvre more persistently or successfully.

For Grant always allowed himself to contemplate the possibility of an entire change in his plans during action; or, rather, he so arranged his plans that they should not fail because of a disarrangement. He knew the vicissitudes of battle well, and was always ready to conform to a new situation. His ability was indeed never so conspicuous as at the

moment when his schemes seemed foiled, and unforeseen emergencies arose. His decisions then were instantaneous, and always adequate. At a crisis he was at his best. Maintaining the same objects, employing often the same means, he was always and instantly ready to vary the use of those means. Thus, he ordered Butler's command to the army of the Potomac the day when it was seen to be useless on the James, but continued his own march and the method of his campaign: thus, in the Wilderness, he issued orders for the next flanking movement, before the battle was ended; thus, at Spottsylvania, on the 9th of May, he withdrew Hancock from the right, as soon as the attack there was foiled, and, while Barlow was still retreating across the Po, the remainder of the Second corps was engaged in Warren's assault.

But after all, the quality most apparent in the national leader, during this campaign, was his unflinching pertinacity. The boldness of his first plunge into the Wilderness, the risk he ran in dividing his army after Spottsylvania, the danger of flank attack to which he was exposed in the long marches to the North Anna and the Pamunkey, were indeed conspicuous, and none the less so because Lee failed to perceive, or at least to grasp, his opportunities: the daring of every one of the great flanking movements equalled the rugged courage with which, when each movement was over, Grant advanced to assault the enemy; but the distinguishing feature of his conduct was the unalterable resolution with which he clung to the line and the course he had marked out, and by adherence to which alone he believed the war could be ended. Hitherto, he had been used to brilliant and almost unbroken success;



achieved, it is true, after tremendous efforts and in spite of prodigious difficulties ; but still, after every pitched battle in which he had been engaged, he had come off conqueror. Now, however, again and again he had assaulted the enemy, and although in no instance had he lost ground, in no instance been compelled to retreat, yet in no instance can he be said to have accomplished all that he desired. He could not, and did not, after any one of these stupendous conflicts, claim a decided victory.

But nothing deterred him. Neither the new and unforeseen difficulties of the ground ; neither the skill of his opponent, nor the splendid fighting of the rebel army ; neither the disappointment, when he saw his immediate plans frustrated and his movements forestalled, nor the chagrin, when his gallant troops found the hostile works impregnable ; neither the anxieties of the government and the country at the rear, nor the long vista of difficulties and dangers which opened at the front ; neither the doubts and despondencies of some who approached him closest in the field, nor the croaking of others at home who wished ill to him and the cause for which he fought ; neither the unavoidable losses which his army sustained, and which no man appreciated more acutely or deplored more profoundly than he ; neither the increasing responsibilities nor the settling gloom of this terrible and seemingly endless campaign—depressed, or discouraged, so far as those nearest him could discover, this imperturbable man. He studied carefully the situation, he appreciated the difficulties, he knew and shared the dangers ; but his confidence never wavered. He believed, all through these anxious days and weary nights, that if

he had not accomplished positive victory, he was yet advancing, not only, as all the world saw, towards Richmond, but towards the goal he had proposed to himself, the destruction of Lee and of the rebellion. He knew that these great shocks of battle were telling, every one; that Lee's forces were diminishing, and could not be constantly renewed; that he was smiting the enemy, hip and thigh; and, although he suffered himself in the encounter, that the rebels could not always prolong the struggle. Never for a moment did it occur to him that he should not conquer in the end. I remember his saying, the day after Cold Harbor, that success was only a question of time.

But the disadvantages were far from being on the whole with Grant; though many a commander in his situation would have been disheartened, he found ample cause for gratulation. He had arrived within sight of the spires of Richmond; he had reduced the strength of Lee's army by nearly thirty thousand men; he had captured ten thousand prisoners and forty cannon; he had obliged the enemy to retreat from every position he had assumed, while he himself had left none, except to advance; Lee had permanently broken none of his lines, turned no flank, carried no important work; and most marked of all, since the battle of the Wilderness, made no serious offensive movement. At Spottsylvania, it is true, the enemy seemed inclined to attempt assault, but was easily repelled; and afterwards, in the march to Milford, when Hancock and Wright were so widely separated; in the superb position the rebels held at the North Anna; in the subsequent long and dangerous movement of the national army to the

Pamunkey ; in the complicated manœuvres between that river and the Chickahominy ; even when a temporary advantage over Warren was gained at Bethesda Church ; when Smith was alone and exposed on the White House road ; and above all, when Grant found himself unable to carry the works at Cold Harbor ;—under all these circumstances, the rebel general remained quiescent. He either could or would fight nowhere except behind his works. He might have maintained a strictly defensive policy, and yet have availed himself of chances to carry out his partial successes, to complete the rebuffs he sometimes administered ; but this he steadfastly declined. He never defended by attacking. His resistance was always and purely passive.

This, undoubtedly, was the result of Grant's method of making war ; this came of the incessant marches and battles ; the rain of blows, each following where the other had struck ; the certainty that the national leader lost no chance, saw every mistake made, and seized every opportunity. This was the real success of the campaign from the Rapidan to the James. With all the valor, all the endurance, all the desperation of the rebel army, its spirit was broken in the Wilderness campaign.

The strategy of Lee, though simpler, was not less conspicuous than that of his antagonist. He was never slow in following Grant's lead ; he was prompt to forestall, or prevent, the immediate consequences which Grant sought to attain. He never allowed the national commander to thrust himself between the army of Northern Virginia and Richmond ; he marched with celerity ; he improvised or elaborated fortifications with marvellous alacrity ; and his per-



sistency was equal to Grant's : only it is always less difficult to persist in defence than in attack ; the desperation of those who know that defeat is destruction is naturally stronger than the ardor which is confident that its failures can be repaired. It must be remembered, too, that this defensive policy was imposed. Lee had not adopted it, until after the battle of the Wilderness ; he made one attempt to discard it afterwards, but the endeavor failed, and thenceforth, the rebel commander was either so crippled, or appalled, that he abandoned offensive movements for ever. Sometimes, indeed, he returned the blow that was given, but he never initiated a great attack again.

This purely defensive course gave Grant and his soldiers enormous encouragement, and was a constant theme for discussion and gratulation in the national army ;—while the depressing influence it exerted on the rebels is known to have neutralized in some degree the emotions which the gallantry of the defence inspired. It was hard indeed for the Southern soldier to submit to the curb which Lee imposed ; and there were rebel generals who would certainly have attempted to distract their enemy by counter-attacks, and perhaps rivalled the brilliant feats of Stonewall Jackson, or the disastrous folly of Hood. Grant, himself, in Lee's situation, would never have been content with a negative defence ; but Lee had apparently counted the cost, and made up his mind that all he could do was to hold Grant off as long as possible ; to tire out, if neither him, nor his army, perhaps the country at the North ; relying on the probability of English or French intervention in favor of the rebellion, and the efforts of the Demo-

cratic party in his behalf. But Grant was the last commander whom it was possible to weary. His perseverance was pitted against Lee's endurance, and so far, neither had been surpassed.

It is impossible fully to understand the conduct of this campaign without considering the system of entrenching which formed one of its most characteristic features. Other armies in other wars had often entrenched themselves ; field fortifications were not unknown before the American rebellion : but the use to which they were put was novel then, although it has since been recognized by European soldiers. The dense forests and abundant undergrowth in America, however, made this use more frequent and indispensable than it can ever be on the broad campaigns where European battles are mostly fought. The woods allowed an enemy to come up close and in force, without giving warning of his approach, and early in the war, the practice began, of throwing up breastworks to protect the army against such advances ;—advances made more dangerous by the improvement in the manufacture of fire-arms, and the extended range and deadly accuracy they had recently acquired.

A trench two feet wide and a foot and a quarter deep could be excavated in twenty minutes, when the men were four feet apart, and shelter was thus obtained for two ranks, one kneeling in the trench, the other lying flat in rear ; the slope was built up with clods of earth, fallen trees, and similar material, and a serviceable parapet quickly formed, with openings through which advances could be made, while outside of all a ditch was dug and an impromptu abatis constructed. When the troops remained in one position

for any length of time, these earthworks were elaborated; lines within lines were built, under the direction of engineers of the regular army, and formidable fortifications arose, with curtains, bastions, lunettes, all manned with skilfully-placed artillery. But besides these more pretentious works, the troops themselves, finding the great advantage and security to be obtained, soon fell to building others of their own accord; and before the campaign was over, a regiment seldom halted for half a day without throwing up its own defences towards the enemy. Often this was done without orders, and in the midst of battle, if a battalion was for half an hour disengaged; and when picks and shovels were not at hand, the men dug up the earth with their bayonets and threw it out with their cups and split canteens. Sometimes it happened that these rude lines, or even the more elaborate works, were stormed by one side or the other, and instantly reversed, and used against those who had constructed them. On the 12th of May, the entrenchments that Hancock carried did far more service to their captors than to Lee.

This system prevailed in both armies, and materially modified the character of the fighting. It protracted the duration of the battles, but made them less bloody, considering their length and the numbers engaged. It was of course especially favorable to Lee, who was enabled at all times to shelter himself, while Grant, always forced to assume the offensive, must always attack works, himself outside of cover. No one can appreciate the difficulties of the national general, nor the advantages of his enemy, or can properly understand the defence that the rebels were



able to make against superior numbers, who fails to take into consideration this new and powerful element in the military situation. Grant, it is true, made himself as secure as Lee, and, whenever the rebels attempted an assault, they suffered the disadvantage which their adversaries more often experienced, and their losses were then in a ratio commensurate with Grant's; but, and this is the gist of the matter, as well as the history of the campaign, Lee did not attack, as a rule, and Grant did; so that Lee enjoyed the advantages and Grant encountered the difficulties which the new system of earthworks developed.

The army under Grant started from Culpeper, numbering one hundred and sixteen thousand effective soldiers, and Lee's command at the same time included between seventy and eighty thousand. Grant received, before the 4th of June, forty thousand reinforcements; Lee, not fewer than thirty thousand. Grant lost during the campaign, thirty-nine thousand men; six thousand five hundred killed, twenty-six thousand wounded, and six thousand six hundred missing: in no single battle more than thirteen thousand. No return of Lee's losses exists; but it is fair to suppose their number to have been about thirty thousand.\* The disproportion is not greater than is usual when one army attacks another in a defensive position, and the defenders remain behind their works. The losses in other wars—in those of Napoleon, in the Franco-German campaigns of 1870 and 1871,—were far greater on either side, than Grant sus-

\* See page 326 for full discussion of the numbers and losses, on both sides, in this campaign.

tained;\* and in the preceding campaigns against Richmond, the casualties had exceeded Grant's,† with this great difference in result—after the seven days' fights on the Peninsula, after Fredericksburg, after Chancellorsville, the national commanders all withdrew; but after the Wilderness, after Spottsylvania, the North Anna, and Cold Harbor, Grant advanced. Even the victories of Antietam and Gettysburg were not followed up with the alacrity which the army that won them showed, after the drawn battles and rebuffs of the Wilderness campaign. The fighting between the Rapidan and the James, in 1864, did more than any circumstance, or event, or series of events of the war, to accomplish that for which the war was waged. The losses were the price at which only the country could be saved.

Nevertheless the campaign had lasted thirty days of incessant battle, and the army of the Potomac had neither captured Richmond nor conquered Lee. The contest was still at its height, and apparently undecided. The country was disappointed, weary,

\* Allison gives the following losses at—

Aspern	...	30,000	French	...	20,000	Austrians.
Borodino	...	50,000	„	...	47,000	Russians.
Leipsic	...	60,000	„	...	43,000	Allies.
Waterloo	...	40,000	„	...	16,686	Allies.

At Gravelottes, the losses were :—

French	...	11,000	Germans	...	19,000
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At Sedan :—

French	...	13,000	Germans	...	9,800
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† During the seven days on the Peninsula, the national losses were 9,148.

At Antietam they were	9,491	At Fredericksburg...	11,291
At Chancellorsville	9,993	At Gettysburg	19,022

anxious ; it could discern no light behind the cloud, no way through the darkness ; it only saw that its troops were still outside the rebel capital, and still confronted by the rebel army ; and as it counted up its losses, it bitterly asked : “ How long ? ”

The commander of the armies, however, and many whom he commanded, had a clearer vision. There were some who knew that although Grant had found more difficulties than he anticipated—a more skilful foe and more stubborn soldiery than he had ever encountered before—he was nevertheless carrying out the identical plan with which he had moved from Culpeper ; that even while north of the Rapidan he had intended eventually to cross the James ; that he set out in May to accomplish the annihilation of Lee, and that every step in the campaign had tended to this accomplishment. There were few indeed in either army who did not know that the rebellion had suffered injuries from which it could never recover ; that it was weaker throughout its entire extent for what it had undergone in Virginia ; that it was less able to withstand Sherman, and Canby, and even Porter, and Farragut, because of the blows dealt it by Grant : that though it still held up its head with proud defiance, and might even yet, in the death grapple, inflict terrible wounds—it had been struck by fatal weapons, and was trembling, if not with fear, with loss of vital power.



*The mis-statements in regard to the numbers, reinforcements, and losses in both the rebel and national armies, during the campaign from the Rapidan, have been so elaborate and so persistent, that I have decided to offer some remarks on each of these points, giving, it will be observed, in every instance, my authority.*

#### NUMBERS.

Shortly after the close of the war, a statement was compiled in the adjutant-general's office, showing the strength of the various rebel armies at different times between the months of April, 1861, and April, 1865. This document gives the present for duty of Lee's army on the 10th of April, 1864, as 52,626, and his aggregate present, as 61,218; and on the strength of this, it has been asserted, again and again, that Grant had three times as many men as Lee, when they moved from the Rapidan. But to produce this showing, Lee's effective force, on the 10th of April, is compared with Grant's aggregate present, on the 1st of May: it is obvious, however, that either Grant's effective strength should be compared with Lee's effective, or Lee's aggregate with Grant's aggregate, and both for the same dates. But between the 10th of April and the 4th of May, Lee was joined by 14,000 men, under Longstreet; by 1,500 of Rodes's division; and by other reinforcements of furloughed men and conscripts; all of whom are excluded from this calculation of the rebel strength on the Rapidan; while Grant received no addition to his force, after the 1st of May. Grant's effective strength, on the 4th of May, was 116,000; Lee's, 75,000. See notes to page 94.

But not content with accepting incompleteness for absolute truth, certain writers have exaggerated inaccuracies into positive misrepresentation. They have not only included in their estimates all the reinforcements that went to Grant, and excluded those that Lee received, before the 4th of May; they not only strip Lee to his effective strength, and count Grant's aggregate as a fighting force; but they proceed often to compute the army under Butler and the forces under Sigel and Crook as part of Grant's immediate command, taking no account of the 50,000

rebels ready to oppose them in the Carolinas, Richmond, and West Virginia; they even include the national forces around Washington and in the Middle Department as if they were present in the field, while Lee's reserves are unmentioned; and then they exclaim that Grant had three times as many men as Lee, in the Wilderness—all based on one garbled piece of information, flourished with a show of authority. For there is no voucher whatever beyond the documents in the War Office, for any statement hitherto made in regard to Lee's forces on the Rapidan. On the 10th of November, 1865, General Lee wrote: "All my records, reports, returns, etc., with the head-quarters of the army were needlessly destroyed by the clerks having them in charge, on the retreat from Petersburg; and such as had been forwarded to the War Department in Richmond were either destroyed in its conflagration, or captured at the South, in the attempt to save them. . . I have not even my letter or order books to which to refer." See McCabe's "Life and Campaigns of General Robert E. Lee," page 645.

The field return of the army of Northern Virginia for April 20th, the latest prior to the battle of the Wilderness, will be found in the Appendix, and shows not only the absence of Longstreet's corps and of Rodes's brigade, but also that the troops in the Valley and at Richmond did not report to Lee, at that time. On or about the same date, the following returns were also made to the adjutant-general of the rebel armies:—

				Effective Strength.		Aggregate Present.	
Richmond	...	...	...	7,138	...	...	8,588
Henrico	...	...	...	1,179	...	...	1,385
North Carolina	...	...	...	12,703	...	...	15,252
District of Cape Fear	...	...	...	6,991	...	...	7,932
South Carolina and Georgia	...	...	...	28,672	...	...	32,652
West Virginia	...	...	...	6,622	...	...	7,771
East Tennessee	...	...	...	18,387	...	...	23,917
				<hr/>		<hr/>	
				81,692		97,497	

At least three-fourths of these troops fought under Lee during the spring and summer of 1864. See note to page 255.

It is natural that brave soldiers and honorable men, who were beaten, should cling for consolation to the theory that the national armies succeeded by dint of overwhelming numbers; but irrefutable facts disturb the theory. The rebels fought with fewer numbers, undoubtedly, and fought magnificently; they fought a great deal longer and harder than their opponents either expected or desired; but the disparity in strength was by no means what has been declared.

#### REINFORCEMENTS.

The fact that there are no returns from either Grant or Lee for the period between the 1st of May and the 20th of June makes it difficult to ascertain the reinforcements of either during that period. General Halleck, in a letter dated May 27th, 1864, estimated the reinforcements sent to Grant, exclusive of W. F. Smith's command, at 40,000; but stated that, of these, 1,000 were stragglers and 1,000 returned veterans. On the other hand, Dana wrote from Grant's head-quarters on the 28th of May, to the Secretary of War: "The number of new troops ordered to this army, since reinforcements began to arrive, is not quite 20,000." Halleck computed the troops joining Grant from Butler at 20,000; but Smith, who commanded the force, reported it at 16,000 at the White House, and 10,000 at Cold Harbor. On the 2nd of June, Dana announced the arrival of 3,727 men, "old and new regiments;" and on the 5th, he said: "Since June 2nd, when I last reported the arrival of reinforcements, the returns show that there have been added to this army 19,900 men: this includes the Eighteenth corps, whose field return of yesterday shows 10,324 men." Dana's statements are, of course, to be preferred, as he gave the numbers which actually arrived. Several thousand of these, however, did not report until after the battle of Cold Harbor. What is decisive, however, is the report of General Abercrombie, who had been in command at all the various bases of the army during the campaign. On the 7th of June, he reported to the adjutant-general of the army of the Potomac: "Number of troops sent forward since May 13, 1864, of all arms, 39,300." It was



always calculated at Grant's head-quarters that he had been reinforced, before the 3rd of June, by 40,000 men; on this calculation he acted, and there is no reasonable doubt of its correctness, based, as it was, on the information from all sources, communicated to the commanding general.

Lee's reinforcements I estimate as follows :—

May 22 ... ..	{	Hoke's old brigade ...	1,500	} See notes to page 226.
		Pickett's division ...	7,500	
		Breckenridge ... ..	3,000	
		Beauregard's command	12,122	Lee's return of June 30.
		Garrison of Richmond	6,176	Return of June 20.
Total ...			30,298	

Lee undoubtedly received reinforcements from Richmond and elsewhere of which no record appears in the papers now extant. The wonderful efforts of the rebel government to strengthen him are apparent, however, in fifty despatches on file in the War Department; 30,000 is a low estimate of his reinforcements prior to the battle of Cold Harbor.

#### LOSSES.

On the 5th of June, Dana stated to the Secretary of War: "Total number of this army, with cavalry included, is 115,000 fighting men." This was within a thousand of the number with which Grant moved from Culpeper, so that the losses about equalled the reinforcements in the national army. This calculation is verified by the reports made up in the adjutant-general's office, from the regimental returns, which show the entire loss, north of the James, between the 1st of May and the 12th of June, to have been 39,259. General Meade, indeed, in his report of Nov. 1, 1864, reckons it at 54,000, but he is contradicted not only by the adjutant-general of the army, but by his own medical director, Colonel McParlin, who, in his report of Nov. 28, 1864, to the surgeon-general of the army, puts the losses at 45,000. General Meade says expressly: "The losses of commanders from the casualties of battle and expiration of service, [and] the continuous operations that have been carried on almost without interruption, have precluded the possibility of any subordinate reports either

being made out or transmitted to these head-quarters. The following narrative is therefore made *principally from memory*, and from such *personal* notes and documents as were at hand. It is necessarily brief and *imperfect*, and will *undoubtedly* in time *be found to contain errors both of omission and commission.*" Meade's calculations of losses were probably based upon the rough estimates sent in immediately after battle, which were often incorrect, and, as in the Wilderness, exaggerated. Numerous inaccuracies appear on the face of his statement. He counts the losses at Spottsylvania, on the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th of May, as if they had occurred at the Wilderness; he reports only 279 men missing at Spottsylvania, after the 11th, although he calculates the entire losses for the same period as over 10,000; and he sets down the wounded, up to the 21st of May, at 27,000, while McParlin, on whose returns his own should have been in a great measure based, reports only 16,000, not including the Ninth corps, and 3,300 "estimated, unrecorded."

The surgeon-general of the army, indeed, is careful to state, in the "Surgical and Medical History" of the War, that absolute accuracy cannot be claimed for his statements in regard to losses, and that those of the adjutant-general are to be preferred, where there is a disagreement. Colonel McParlin, also, claims only to make estimates and approximations to the absolute truth; his reports, however, would not differ widely from those of the adjutant-general, were it not for the error into which he falls, of counting the missing twice over, once as "missing," and again as "wounded, unrecorded," or "wounded, who fell into the enemy's hands:" the last two groups should evidently be included under the head of "missing." If these are deducted from McParlin's totals, there will not be found a difference of more than one or two thousand between his estimates for the campaign and the corrected returns of the War Department. The latter, however, must show the absolute losses; as the regimental returns can hardly fail to include, under the three heads of "killed," "wounded," and "missing," every man originally in his place, who did not return.

I subjoin the three statements, for comparison :—

WILDERNESS, May 5 to 7.

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
Adjutant-General ...	2,261 .....	8,785 .....	2,902 .....	13,948
Meade, May 5 to 12	3,288 .....	19,278 .....	6,844 .....	29,410
McParlin, ... ..	2,009 .....	7,302—1,800... estimated, unrecorded.	3,893 .....	15,004
not including Ninth corps.				

SPOTTSYLVANIA, May 8 to 21.

Adjutant-General ...	2,271 .....	9,360 .....	1,970 .....	13,601
Meade, May 12 to 21	2,146 .....	7,956 .....	279 .....	10,381
McParlin ... ..	1,781 .....	9,031—1,500... estimated, unrecorded.	2,077 .....	14,389

NORTH ANNA, May 23 to 27.

Adjutant-General ...	186 .....	792 .....	165 .....	1,143
Meade, May 21 to 31	150 .....	1,130 .....	327 .....	1,607
McParlin... ..	223 .....	1,460 .....	290 .....	1,973

TOTOPOTOMOY, May 27 to 31.

Adjutant-General ...	99 .....	358 .....	52 .....	509
Meade ... ..	No report.			
McParlin ... ..	No report.			

COLD HARBOR, May 31 to June 12.

Adjutant-General ...	1,769 .....	6,752 .....	1,537 ... ..	10,058
Meade, June 1 to 12	1,705 .....	9,042 .....	2,406 .....	13,153
McParlin ... ..	1,420 .....	7,545—900 ...	1,864 .....	14,129

McParlin estimates the killed and missing in Smith's command during this period at 500; the wounded at 1,900.

TOTAL LOSSES DURING THE CAMPAIGN.

Adjutant-General ...	6,586 .....	26,047 .....	6,626 .....	39,259
Meade ... ..	7,289 .....	37,406 .....	9,856 .....	54,551
McParlin... ..	5,933 .....	31,438 .....	8,124 .....	45,495

As there are no returns of Lee's losses in existence, my computation of them is based on a comparison of the statement of his forces on the 1st of May, 1864,—see page 94— with his field return of June 30th, the next in date to that of April 20th. This gives his present effective as 51,863, and his aggregate present as 62,571; it includes Beauregard's command, but not the troops in Richmond, nor Early's corps, which was then absent in the Valley. It



also omits Hampton's cavalry and Dearing's brigade, as well as all the artillery of the Second corps, except three battalions : these three commands amounted to 5,000 men. See note to page 302. As the other corps numbered at that time 12,000, 14,000, and 16,500, respectively, it seems fair to allow 12,000 for Early. General Early indeed states that he had only 8,000 muskets ; but he had no access to official documents when he wrote, and I have found his figures so often and so widely at variance with those in the rebel archives, the difference being always in his own favor, that I have been obliged invariably to reject his testimony in regard to numbers, unless corroborated. Including Early, then, the army of Northern Virginia, on the 30th of June, was 69,000 strong. Now if Lee had 75,000 men on the 1st of May, and received 25,000 reinforcements afterwards, his numbers should have been 100,000. He probably lost 5,000 in the various operations before Petersburg, in June ; but making every allowance, the loss of the army of Northern Virginia, between the 4th of May and the 5th of June, cannot have been less than 25,000 or 30,000. The Commissary-General of Prisoners at Washington reported 10,000 prisoners turned over to him by the army of the Potomac, during that time.

It will be observed that, in all these calculations, and indeed throughout this history, *the same rule is applied to both armies*. In announcing the numbers, the effective strength is always given, and not, unless the fact is clearly stated, the aggregate present : and in estimating losses, I intend to give the actual loss sustained, not the supposed or transitory deficit apparent the day after a battle. This method is the only one possible, in consequence of the imperfection or absence of the returns ; it reduces the figures, but brings them nearer the actual truth, and is of course fair, *as it is applied alike to the national and rebel armies*. See Appendix to Volume Three for complete statement of losses in army of Potomac and army of James, from May, 1864, to April, 1865, compiled in adjutant-general's office from regimental returns.

## CHAPTER XX.

Grant's plan for crossing the James—Co-operation of Hunter and Sheridan—Sherman's advance into Georgia—Situation of army at Cold Harbor—Favorable news from Hunter—Course of the James and Appomattox rivers—Topography of country—Preparations for crossing the James—Exposure of Butler—Smith to return to army of the James—Kautz and Gillmore moved against Petersburg—Failure of expedition—Alarm of Beauregard—Excitement in Richmond—Difficulties of Grant's new movement against Petersburg—Grandeur of general plan—Readiness of Lee—Passage of the Chickahominy—Arrival at the James—Plan for the capture of Petersburg—Grant visits Bermuda Hundred—Instructions to Butler and Meade—Apprehensions of national government—Hancock crosses the James on ferry-boats—Smith arrives at Bermuda Hundred—Hancock ordered to advance on Petersburg—Bridging of James river—Army of Potomac crosses the James—Smith crosses the Appomattox—Skirmishes at Baylor's farm—Arrives in front of Petersburg—Delay of Smith—Assault on works—Success of Smith—Arrival of Hancock—Smith's failure to push his victory—Dispositions of Smith and Hancock—Arrival of rebel reinforcements—Withdrawal of rebels from Butler's front—Butler seizes the railroad—Wright sent to reinforce Butler—Disappointment of Grant at inaction of Smith—Arrival of Ninth corps—Meade ordered to assume command—Arrival of Warren—Assaults of 16th and 17th of June—Butler loses the railroad—Assault of the 18th—Characteristics of Meade—Results and character of movement—Skill and energy of subordinates—Grant's determination to envelop Petersburg—Fighting it out on the same line.

THE rebels had now been driven back to such proximity to Richmond that it was impossible for Grant, by any further flanking operation, to interpose between them and the defences of their capital. He was still, however, in a position either to move

by Lee's left flank, and invest the city from the northern side, or to continue his advance, by the enemy's right, to the south bank of the James. Halleck strongly urged the former course, and set forth his reasons in an elaborate letter; but Grant considered that it would be "impracticable to hold a line north and east of Richmond, that would protect the Fredericksburg railroad;" and this, if he moved to the right, would become the only possible route for supplying the national army. "To do so," he said, "would give us a long vulnerable line of road to protect, exhausting much of our means to guard it, and would leave open to the enemy all his lines of communication on the south side of the James. My idea from the start has been to beat Lee's army, if possible, north of Richmond; then, after destroying his line of communication on the north side of the James river, to transfer the army to the south side, and besiege Lee in Richmond, or follow him south, if he should retreat. . . I will continue to hold substantially the ground now occupied by the army of the Potomac, taking advantage of any favorable circumstances that may present themselves, until the cavalry can be sent west to destroy the Virginia Central railroad. . . . When this is effected, I shall move the army to the south side of the James river."

For the success of this plan, it was important, first of all, to break up the railroad connection between Richmond and the Shenandoah Valley and Lynchburg. Sheridan was accordingly directed to proceed to the west as far as Charlottesville, where the Virginia Central crosses the Lynchburg and Alexandria road; to destroy both lines for a distance of several



miles beyond the junction, communicate with Hunter, and then find his way back to the main army, destroying the railroad as he moved. General Hunter had already been ordered to move up the Valley, to Staunton and Charlottesville, living on the country, and destroying the railroads beyond the possibility of repair for weeks. Further instructions were now sent him, by Sheridan, to complete this work, and return with the cavalry to the army of the Potomac. Lynchburg, however, lay directly in his path, and he was permitted, if he could, to reach that point; but Grant hardly hoped that he would succeed, and added: "The direction I would now give is that if this letter reaches you in the Valley, between Staunton and Lynchburg, you immediately turn east by the most practicable route, until you strike the Lynchburg branch of the Virginia Central road. From there, move eastward, along the line of the road, destroying it completely and thoroughly, until you join General Sheridan. After the work laid out for General Sheridan and yourself is thoroughly done, proceed to join the army of the Potomac, by the route laid down in General Sheridan's instructions." Both commanders were urged, if possible, to destroy a portion of the great James river canal, which was almost as important an avenue of supply to Richmond as the railways. The whole idea with which their forces were to be combined was, first, to cover the important valley of the Shenandoah against any rebel advance, and then to completely sever Richmond from the north and northwest, so that, when Grant moved across the James, no supplies whatever could reach the enemy from

those directions. Sheridan's movement, it was also hoped, would induce the rebel general to detach his own cavalry in pursuit, so that a freer field would be left to Grant for the passage of the James.

At daylight, on the 7th of June, Sheridan started from Newcastle ferry, on the Pamunkey river, taking with him two divisions. They carried three days' rations, which they were to make last five, two days' forage on the pommel of the saddle, and one hundred rounds of ammunition per man. Wilson remained with the army of the Potomac, to guard its flanks, and protect the crossing of the James.

Grant, meanwhile, had not forgotten Sherman. The day after the great assault at Spottsylvania, he recommended him for a major-generalship in the regular army, and on the 20th of May, again urged his promotion, together with that of Meade. Every day, Sherman reported his progress in Georgia, which was tedious and difficult, assaults and flanking movements alternating somewhat as in Virginia, though the battles were on a smaller scale. Sherman kept constantly in mind the relations of his campaign to that of Grant. His despatches abound with expressions like the following: "Notify General Grant that I will hold all of Johnston's army too busy to send anything against him." "Should General Grant want me to hasten events at any time, let me know, and I will push in spite of weather." "One of my first objects being to give full employment to Jo. Johnston, it makes but little difference where he is, so he is not on his way to Virginia." "General Grant may rest easy that Johnston will not trouble him, if I

can help it by labor or thought." To Grant himself he wrote: "I have daily sent to Halleck telegrams which I asked him to repeat to you, and which he says he has done. You, therefore, know where we are, and what we have done. If our movement has been slower than you calculated, I can explain the reasons, though I know you believe me too earnest and impatient to be behind time."

The chief, however, had no fault to find with his great subordinate. Moving on the 5th of May, Sherman had, first, by a flank movement compelled Johnston to fall back from Buzzard's Roost and Dalton; then fought him at Resaca, after which Johnston again retreated; had skirmished heavily at Adairsville, and driven the enemy still further; and come up with him at Cassville, when Johnston fell back across the Etowa river. Rome was next captured, with valuable supplies; and, on the 25th of May, a severe battle occurred at New Hope church, near Dallas. At this point, Johnston assaulted Sherman repeatedly, but each time was repulsed with heavy loss. On the 4th of June, New Hope church was abandoned by the rebels, and Johnston fell back to the strong positions of Kenesaw, Pine, and Lost mountains. By the time that Grant had reached the James, Sherman had advanced about eighty or ninety miles from Chattanooga, and was within thirty miles of Atlanta. Kenesaw mountain, however, still barred the way.

He never forgot that he was expected, eventually, to reach the sea. On the 29th of May, he telegraphed: "I have no doubt Johnston has in my front every man he can scrape, and Mobile must





now be at our mercy, if General Canby and General Banks could send to Pascagoula ten thousand men." Again: "Has the movement on Mobile been ordered? General Canby telegraphs me that he can spare General A. J. Smith. All I ask is the co-operation of Farragut's fleet." On the 30th of May: "If General Banks and Admiral Porter are all out of the Red river, instead of acting offensively in West Louisiana, I advise that the same command that General A. J. Smith took with him, reinforced by two or three thousand from Memphis and Vicksburg, be sent to Pascagoula, to act against Mobile, in concert with Admiral Farragut, *according to the original plan*. If this is feasible, I wish the orders to go direct from the general-in-chief, to General A. J. Smith." To these suggestions Grant replied, in the midst of the battle of Cold Harbor: "June 3rd, three P.M. . . If there are any surplus troops west, they could be advantageously used against Mobile, as suggested in Sherman's despatch of May 30th. Please so order. Let Reynolds or Franklin command the expedition." Sherman's anxiety in regard to Mobile was of course induced by the fact that he had himself been ordered by Grant to move towards that point, and its capture by Banks had been planned so that on Sherman's arrival, that officer might meet supplies. On the 5th of June, Grant said: "The object of sending troops to Mobile, now, would be not so much to assist Sherman against Johnston, as to secure for him a base of supplies, after his work is done."

The army at Cold Harbor was now so near the enemy's lines that the men on either side could fire at each other from their entrenched positions, without advancing, and Grant's approaches had been

carried to points within forty yards of the rebel parapet. Skirmishing occurred daily, the working parties were often fired at, and night attacks were sometimes made by the rebels, but with no significance, and no serious loss to either side. On the 4th of June, the enemy disappeared from Burnside's front, and the national line was shortened, the Ninth corps being drawn in from the right, and posted between Smith and Warren, where the interval had been greatest. On the 6th, Warren was in his turn withdrawn, and massed in rear of the centre, leaving Burnside again on the extreme right. On the 7th, Hancock rested on the Chickahominy, and two divisions of the Fifth corps were moved to the left of the entire army, extending as far as Bottom's bridge, and Despatch station, on the York river railroad ; they thus secured the route by which the army must march to the James. Warren's third division guarded the White House road, and Wilson picketed the Chickahominy, from Bottom's bridge to Jones's. Warren drove the enemy from the fords and bridges in his front, but did not occupy the opposite bank, for Grant was unwilling to push the enemy further back, until himself ready to make or force a passage ; and the army of the Potomac was not to move, till Sheridan should be fairly on his way to the Valley.

On the 7th, information was received that Hunter had met and defeated an important rebel force, killing its commander, W. S. Jones, and seizing Staunton, on the Virginia Central railroad. Meade was at once directed to select and fortify a line, behind which the army of the Potomac could move to the Chickahominy. Abercrombie, in command at White House, was ordered to be in readi-

ness, at the shortest notice, to remove the iron from the York river railroad, which had once connected White House with Richmond. Ferry-boats and pontoon bridge materials were collected by Butler, and sent to Fort Powhatan, on the James; a siege train was put on boats, and awaited orders; the maps and the country were studied, and engineers sent out to discover the best points for crossing the rivers. Halleck was now directed to send all further reinforcements to City Point.

The James river is navigable as far as Richmond, a hundred and fifty miles from the sea. At that point, it is hardly more than a quarter of a mile across, and runs directly south for six or seven miles, making its first turn below the city, at Drury's Bluff, where the rebels had erected the formidable works which Butler endeavored in vain to turn. From Drury's Bluff, it flows in a remarkably sinuous course, by Dutch Gap, Deep Bottom, Malvern Hill, and other places made famous during the war, to City Point, where its width is more than half a mile. By the stream, the distance from Richmond to the mouth of the Appomattox is at least thirty miles; as the bird flies, about half as far. The curves in the river, as well as its narrowness, make it susceptible of easy defence, and the enemy had constructed commanding batteries on either side, which effectually barred all advance higher than Turkey Bend. There was besides a fleet of gunboats and rams in front of Richmond, and torpedoes lined the bed of the stream, as far down as Aiken's landing.

The Appomattox rises a hundred and fifty miles away, in South-Western Virginia, flowing easterly in



a general course, until it reaches Petersburg, ten miles from its mouth, on the southern shore. At this point, the river makes an abrupt turn to the north, and then flows east again, till it empties into the James, between City Point and Bermuda Hundred. The Appomattox is navigable for vessels of a hundred tons, as far as Petersburg. Before the war, this town had a population of eighteen thousand, and was connected with City Point by a railroad, which of course was interrupted when the national troops arrived. The great Southern and Western roads, as well as that from Norfolk, as we have seen, all converge at Petersburg, but only a single line communicates with Richmond. Petersburg, therefore, was the obvious objective point of any army moving against Richmond on the southern side of the James. With Petersburg in the possession of Grant, Lee could not remain one week in Richmond, or on the northern side.

Below City Point, the James river widens and becomes a majestic stream, flowing south-easterly, to the sea. The Chickahominy runs in the same direction, from Cold Harbor to the James, and both armies were still on its northern bank; so that Lee would be easily able to interpose, if Grant attempted to cross the former stream at any point near the rebel lines. It was necessary, therefore, to make a wide detour to avoid interruption, and no good point for crossing the James could be found, nearer than Wilcox's landing, twelve miles east of City Point by the river, and thirty-five from Grant's position at Cold Harbor. Windmill Point, on the southern bank, immediately opposite Wilcox's landing, is twenty miles by road from Petersburg. The James river

here is twenty-one hundred feet in width, and over eighty feet in depth. Thus, in order to reach Petersburg, Grant would be obliged to march more than fifty miles, and to cross both the Chickahominy and the James, the latter at an extremely difficult point; while Lee was not more than six miles from Richmond, nor twenty-five from Petersburg; he could cross the James where it was only a few hundred feet in width, he had a railroad to facilitate the movement of his army, and no interruption to fear from an enemy while on the way.

The army of the James would be particularly exposed during the execution of the manœuvre, for if Lee should detect the withdrawal of Grant, and divine its object, he would be able to throw his whole command on the southern side, and fall upon Butler in force, before the army of the Potomac could arrive. Officers were accordingly sent to examine the defences at Bermuda Hundred, and make sure that Butler could hold his own in case of attack by superior numbers; and the Eighteenth corps was held in readiness to rejoin the army of the James. Smith was to leave the trenches on the night of the 12th of June, and make a forced march to White House, taking neither wagons nor artillery, these moving with the main army. At White House, he was to embark at once, and take "no time for rest until he reached City Point." With this reinforcement, Grant calculated that Butler would be able to hold out, until Meade came up in support. "The balance of the force," he said, "will not be more than one day behind, unless detained by the whole of Lee's army, in which case you will be strong enough."

On the 11th, Grant said to Butler : " Expecting the arrival of the Eighteenth corps, on Monday night, if you deem it practicable, with the force you have, to seize and hold Petersburg, you may prepare to start, on the arrival of troops to hold your present lines. I do not want Petersburg visited, however, unless you feel a reasonable confidence of success. If you should go there, I think troops should take nothing with them, except what they can carry, depending upon supplies being sent after the place is secured."

Immediately after the battle at Drury's Bluff, in May, the rebels had seized the railroad in front of Butler, connecting Petersburg and Richmond, and no efforts of that commander, even before Smith was withdrawn from the southern side of the James, had availed to regain this all-important line. Beauregard remained in Butler's front, though most of his troops had been detached and sent to Lee. He had a very clear apprehension of the military situation, and on the 7th of June, four days after the battle of Cold Harbor, while the army of the Potomac yet lay quiet on the north bank of the Chickahominy, he telegraphed to his government : " Should Grant have left Lee's front, he doubtless intends operating against Richmond, along James river, probably on southern side. Petersburg, nearly defenceless, would be captured before it could be reinforced."

On the 9th, Butler sent Gillmore with two thousand infantry, and Kautz at the head of fifteen hundred cavalry, in the direction of Petersburg ; they were to destroy the bridges across the Appomattox river, and, if possible, capture the town. Gillmore returned, reporting the works in his front too strong



to assault, but Kautz carried the fortifications on the southern side, and entered Petersburg, driving before him about fourteen hundred rebels, mostly militia: being, however, unsupported, he also was obliged to retire. The bridges were not destroyed; and Gillmore was at once relieved by Butler from command.

The enemy, meanwhile, had been greatly alarmed. Early in the day, Beauregard telegraphed to Richmond: "General Wise urgently calls for reinforcements to meet the enemy advancing in force on Petersburg, by City Point, Prince George, and Baxter roads. Have sent him all I can spare from the lines. Without the troops sent to General Lee, I shall have to elect between abandoning lines on Bermuda neck and those of Petersburg. Please give me the views of the government on subject." Later, he said: "General Dearing telegraphs from Petersburg: 'If city is to be saved, send reinforcements immediately. Enemy has taken entrenchments, and is advancing in force.' I have none to send him, without abandoning Bermuda Hundred lines." Still later: "Enemy is now in possession of part of defensive works around Petersburg. Delay in sending reinforcements will be fatal to that city, and Richmond, for its supplies." At nine P.M., when the attack was over, he telegraphed: "Enemy has been driven from Petersburg. We have the works again. He may, however, renew the attack tomorrow. . . Necessity for troops still urgent."

Thus, Beauregard, at least, not only foresaw Grant's probable action, but recognized the commanding importance of Petersburg, and when the event justified his predictions, manifested the

greatest anxiety to preserve this key to Richmond. Had a sufficient force been sent against the isolated and almost defenceless town, it could not only have been taken, but held, and months of weary toil and thousands of precious lives would have been saved. But a force of only thirty-five hundred men was sent, and these returned, after having absolutely been in possession of the prize. On the 10th, Beauregard telegraphed: "Information just received that a considerable column of the enemy's infantry has just crossed this evening to the south side of the Appomattox, indicating another attack on Petersburg. Without immediate reinforcements we shall lose that city, or our lines in front of Bermuda Hundred."

The excitement and confusion in Richmond, at this time, were extreme. The troops were all at the defences. The departments and shops were closed. The influx of citizens from all parts of the state, north of the James, was great and continuous; the stock of provisions had failed, when the Petersburg and Danville roads were cut. The meat issues to the troops were discontinued for a while, and flour was scarce and dear. The reports from Hunter were alarming in the last degree, and the uncertainty as to Grant's intentions was painful. Troops were hurried now to the north, now to the south side of the James. Orders were given, and countermanded. The cavalry was sent to confront Sheridan, whose movement was, of course, at once known to Lee; and Breckenridge was again dispatched to the Valley, to make what head he could against Hunter. But on the 11th, news came in that the junction with

Crook and Averill had been formed, and Ewell's entire corps, under Early, was sent, the next day, to Charlottesville.

The operation now contemplated by Grant transcended in difficulty and danger any that he had attempted during the campaign. He was to withdraw an army from within forty yards of the enemy's line, and to march through the difficult swamps of the Chickahominy bottom, to positions where that stream could be crossed without interruption from the rebels ; then, to advance to the James, a great and tidal river, at a point seven hundred yards across ; to effect a passage with all the munitions and supplies of a hundred thousand soldiers, changing his base, at the same time, from White House to City Point, a hundred and fifty miles apart ; to effect a combination of Meade's force with that on the James ; and, finally, advance, with his double army, against Petersburg. Not only was the movement liable to interruption from Lee on the northern side, but Grant's long and circuitous route would compel him to be several days on the march, while the distance from Richmond to Petersburg is only twenty miles, and Lee's camp was within five or six hours of the army of the James.

The whole plan of the national commander at this juncture assumed magnificent proportions. Sherman was advancing towards Atlanta and the sea, and Canby had been ordered to begin the attack against Mobile, to meet him, so that the rebel forces west of the mountains were all engaged : Hunter was moving up the Valley of Virginia, Crook and Averill were converging from the west and south-west, to cut off entirely the supplies reach-



ing Richmond from those directions ; Sheridan was advancing to complete the destruction and isolation on the north, while Grant himself moved with the bulk of his forces against Petersburg and the southern railroads, and was ordering cavalry to be sent to cut the canal and the Danville road. The rebel capital was surrounded by a terrible circle of fire, gradually drawing closer and closer, while the army and commander that guarded it must turn in every direction against the converging and contracting lines.

Lee, however, was not unequal to the emergency. He sent a portion of his own cavalry to confront Sheridan, retaining W. F. Lee's division between the Chickahominy and the James ; and dispatched first Breckenridge, and then Ewell's entire corps, under Early, to check the alarming advance of Hunter in the rear. The troops opposed to Crook and Averill were encouraged to do their uttermost ; Beauregard was retained in front of Bermuda Hundred ; every disposable man had been brought from the sea-coast ; and Lee himself, with the army of Northern Virginia, lay behind the works at Cold Harbor, watching for Grant's next movement, and ready to thwart or oppose it, with whatever force he could bring to bear. The mightiest issues of battle were again in the scales.

On the night of the 12th of June, the army of the Potomac moved. The left of the Second corps now rested on the Chickahominy, Wright and Burnside forming the right centre and right of the army, while Warren had been posted on the extreme left, and Wilson picketed the lower Chickahominy. Soon after nightfall, Wilson made the passage, at

the point still called Long bridge, though the bridge had been destroyed. Under cover of the darkness, the dismounted troopers struggled through the swamps, clambered over drift-logs, and finally crossed the stream, using the limbs of the overhanging trees for bridges. As soon as the leading detachment had gained a footing on the southern side, the rebel force of observation fled. A pontoon bridge was rapidly laid, and, shortly after midnight, the brigade of troopers was all across, and pushing out towards Richmond, by the roads striking White Oak swamp. Warren followed close, and by six or seven o'clock, the Fifth corps was also on the south side of the Chickahominy. Smith started, at dark, for White House; and Burnside marched by the roads nearest to those of Smith, as far as Tunstall station, where their routes crossed, and the Eighteenth corps had precedence: after Smith had passed, Burnside moved on to Jones's bridge, on the Chickahominy. Hancock and Wright meanwhile were ordered to guard the line towards the enemy, until the Fifth and Ninth corps had entirely passed; then, Hancock marched to Long bridge, following Warren, and Wright to Jones's, in the rear of Burnside. The routes of the different corps more than once intersected each other, for the roads were few, but the orders were explicit, and no confusion occurred; each commander knew exactly when to give way, and when to proceed. Hancock, on the new right, had the direct and shorter road, while Wright and Burnside made a long detour. One brigade of cavalry covered the rear, and the trains, escorted by Ferrero's colored division, marched, by the roads furthest from the enemy, to Window Shades and Coles's ferry.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 13th of June, Grant's head-quarters were at Long bridge, where Hancock's column had arrived. Warren and Wilson now reported, from the other side of the Chickahominy, that the enemy in their front had seized and fortified strong positions, north of the James. Lee, indeed, had discovered the movement at daybreak, and telegraphed to Richmond that the army of Grant had left his front. He seemed, however, unable to divine the intentions of the national commander, for Warren's dispositions completely masked the operations of the army of the Potomac ; some sharp skirmishing occurred at Riddle's shop, in the White Oak swamp, and Lee doubtless supposed a direct advance on Richmond to be the object of Grant, for he entrenched in front of Wilson and Warren. His appearance here indicated one of the dangers to which Grant's army was exposed, that of attack on the right, in the midst of the flanking movement. But, true to his character, Lee contented himself with throwing up defensive lines.

All this day, the various corps were in motion. Smith reported his arrival at White House at daybreak ; he had sent off three thousand men to City Point at once, and two thousand more would be on transports by nine. He was directed to dispatch his troops as fast as they could be embarked, without waiting for divisions, "the object being to get to Bermuda Hundred at the earliest possible moment."

The point on the James river nearly opposite Fort Powhatan, where it was intended that the army of the Potomac should cross, was marshy, and rude roads across the swamps were constructed of logs



laid roughly side by side, and called corduroy roads, after the thick-ribbed cloth which in surface they resembled. Before dark, Hancock was encamped on the James, near Charles City court-house, while Burnside and Wright had arrived at the Chickahominy, but were obliged to wait for pontoons; they made the crossing during the night.

Grant was now strongly urged, by some in his confidence, to move up the north bank of the James, and cross that river at City Point; the rebels, it was thought, would thus be still longer deceived as to his intentions, and remain on the northern side for another day. But the opposition shown to Warren and Wilson convinced Grant that he could not advance in that direction without encountering Lee's whole army, and perhaps endangering the passage of the James. Butler, besides, had gone far towards completing preparations for the crossing at Fort Powhatan and Windmill Point; his river boats had been transferred for the time to Meade; roads on both banks had been built across the swamps; and the pontoons were collecting for a bridge. The orders were, therefore, issued for crossing at Wilcox's landing in the morning. At half-past four p.m., Grant said to Halleck, from Wilcox's landing: "The advance of our troops have reached this place. Will commence crossing the James to-morrow. Wilson's cavalry and Warren's corps moved from Long bridge to White Oak swamp, to cover the crossing of the balance of the army. Smith's corps went around by water, and will commence arriving at City Point to-night." During the day, he received a message from Butler: "There were this morning but about two thousand men in

Petersburg, partly militia. I can, by three o'clock to-morrow, have three thousand well-mounted cavalry to co-operate with you against Petersburg."

A force of national gunboats, under Admiral Lee, was at this time guarding the James in its narrower part, between City Point and the fortifications of Richmond; and on the night of the 13th, Grant ordered Butler to sink a number of boats loaded with stone, to obstruct navigation above the point where these vessels lay, but within reach of their guns, so that the fleet could prevent a removal. Butler had prepared these stone boats long before, but had refrained from sinking them, lest he should seem to reflect on the navy. The naval officers themselves hardly wished to admit the possibility of their being unable to hold the river. This, however, was no time for delicacy: a single vessel from Richmond, finding its way by night as far as City Point, might do infinite damage to stores and depôts, and if it reached the position of the army, prevent the passage of the river, for a day. The barest possibility of such a chance was to be avoided, and Grant at once gave the order, which was never questioned or criticized. On the contrary, a few days afterwards, the admiral requested the sinking of additional obstructions.

On the morning of the 14th of June, Grant instructed Meade: "Expedition in crossing is what is wanted, and to secure this you can cross at different points, or all from one place, as you deem best." Accordingly, at half-past eight A.M., Meade directed Hancock to begin crossing on transports, from Wilcox's wharf. At half-past nine, he said: "You need not spend any time in taking up a line, but hold yourself ready to

move, as you may receive orders to march to Petersburg, in which case rations will be sent you from City Point." This morning, Grant said to Meade : "The moment the corduroy approaches opposite Fort Powhatan are finished to the river, have the pontoon bridge laid, and the river closed against the passage of the boats, until all your troops and trains are crossed to the south side. Direct boats arriving with troops to debark them below the bridge, from where they will march to their place of destination."

Having thus completed his arrangements for the crossing, Grant proceeded, by transport, to Bermuda Hundred, to issue the necessary orders for the immediate capture of Petersburg. Smith was not yet in sight, but Grant directed Butler to move him at once, on his arrival, against the town, and add to his force all the troops that could be spared from the position at Bermuda Hundred. The general-in-chief himself would return to the army of the Potomac, to hasten its crossing, and throw it forward to Petersburg, as rapidly as possible. He could thus, he said, bring troops in front of the town more rapidly than Lee. Before leaving Bermuda Hundred, he sent a despatch to Washington : "Our forces will commence crossing the James to-day. The enemy show no signs of yet having brought troops to the south side of Richmond. I will have Petersburg secured, if possible, before they get there in much force."

To this, the President himself replied : "I have just received your despatch of one P.M., yesterday. I begin to see it. You will succeed. God bless you all." The ideas expressed by Halleck,



in favor of another route, had doubtless been made known to the President, for the government was greatly alarmed at the movement to the south side of the James. They believed Washington would be endangered by the operation, not perceiving, as Grant did, that the depletion which the rebels had suffered, rendered them utterly unable to make a successful invasion of the North. Six weeks before, when the terrible battles between the Rapidan and the James were yet unfought, the exposure of the national capital would have made Grant's movement more than rash; but now that he had driven Lee into the defences of Richmond, weakened, disheartened, and alarmed, while national troops were converging from West and East Virginia, north of the rebel capital, Grant could with impunity throw the bulk of his forces against the great southern avenues, which were all that were left untouched of the communications of Richmond. Lee could not possibly detach troops in sufficient numbers to seriously endanger Washington; and if he sent only a small command, it would be to eventual ruin.

On his return to Wilcox's landing, Grant found that Lee was holding the line from Malvern Hill to the Chickahominy, in force, and sent word at once, at eight p.m., to Butler: "The cavalry commander reports that Ewell and Hill's corps have taken up the line from Malvern Hill to White Oak swamp. This looks favorable for the success of your attack on Petersburg to-night. General Hancock's corps, numbering about twenty-eight thousand men, will be all over to the south side of the James river, at Windmill Point, before daylight, and will march in the morning direct for Petersburg, with directions,

however, to halt at a point on that road nearest City Point, unless he receives further orders. If the force going into Petersburg find reinforcements necessary, by sending back to General Hancock, he will push forward." Butler was also instructed to send sixty thousand rations for Hancock to Windmill Point, by water, as the command could not otherwise be supplied during the crossing of the river. "Without this precaution, the services of this corps cannot be had for any emergency tomorrow." At the same time, Butler was ordered to send an army gunboat,\* of which he had several under his command, to Fort Powhatan, to remain there till the crossing of the army should be completed, and to request Admiral Lee to send one of his vessels for the same purpose.

In the night, news came that Smith had arrived at Bermuda Hundred. He was put in motion at once by Butler, and reinforced by three thousand cavalry, under Kautz, and Hinks's division of colored troops, so that his command amounted to eighteen thousand men. Crossing to the south side of the Appomattox, by a pontoon bridge, he marched all night in the direction of Petersburg. Thus, all was done that Grant could do, towards accomplishing the capture of the town. An able commander, with a sufficient force, was sent against it, and Hancock, with twenty-eight thousand men,

\* Butler, with his usual ingenuity, had organized a fleet of what he called "army gunboats;"—transports, or river steamers, worked by ordinary seamen, but armed with light artillery, and manned by troops of the line. They proved very effective in patrolling the rivers, guarding the shores, and convoying unarmed transports.

was ordered to move, without waiting for rations, in his support. At this time, there were not two thousand men in Petersburg; Beauregard's force was in front of Bermuda Hundred, and Lee's army north of the James.

During the night of the 14th, the pontoon bridge across the James was completed by the engineers. The river was seven hundred yards wide, where it was laid, and the channel boats were in thirteen fathoms of water.\* Burnside was ordered to send his artillery across at once, and the march began at midnight, while the Second corps was moving by ferry-boats. At the same hour, Smith was crossing the Appomattox, nearly twenty miles away. At ten p.m., Hancock was informed by Meade: "General Butler has been ordered to send to you at Windmill Point, sixty thousand rations. So soon as these are received, you will move your corps by the most direct route to Petersburg, taking up a position where the City Point railroad crosses Harrison's creek." Again, at seven a.m., on the 15th: "Ferry over all your artillery and wagons at both ferries, and get over as soon as possible." At half-past seven: "You will not wait for the rations, but move immediately to the position assigned you last evening. . . It is important you should move." The troops and material of the Second corps were all safely landed on the southern bank, at an early hour on the 15th; and at nine a.m., the rations from Windmill Point not having arrived, Hancock ordered the head of his

\* The site for the bridge was selected by Colonels Comstock and Porter, of Grant's staff; the approaches were prepared by General Weitzel, of Butler's staff; the bridge itself was laid by General Benham and Major Duane, of the engineers.



column to start. It was not, however, in motion at once, and at half-past ten, he was again ordered to push forward. At eleven o'clock the column moved.

All this day the army of the Potomac was crossing the James. The banks were covered with troops, whose gun-barrels glistened in long and serried lines, as they approached or left the river-side. The artillery and the regimental wagons were parked near the shore; transports waited at the various wharves, where the embarkation or landing was carried on; and the great bridge of boats was alive with a continuous stream of infantry and artillery, and of army trains. Above, the gunboats guarded the passage, while below, a fleet of steamers was in sight, bringing reinforcements, and waiting for a break in the bridge to allow them to pass. Smith's transports could be distinguished in the distance, near City Point, and the roar of Wilson and Warren's guns was heard, as they guarded the rear. The long processions of men and boats, the masses of white-covered wagons, contrasting with the rich green foliage that reached to the shore, the shining cannon, the brilliant banners, the aides-de-camp riding rapidly to and fro, the mules tugging their heavy burdens; the surging crowd, the incessant motion, the varying color,—all seen under the dazzling sky of June, and reflected back from the blue waters of the James,—made a panorama of peculiar and exciting splendor; while the idea that the great river was reached at last, that after four long years of toil and combat, the goal of so many campaigns was in sight; that the evolutions displayed on land and water, the approach of the army on the northern bank, the passage of one corps by ferry-boats, and of another by the won-

derful bridge that spanned the James, the movement of Hancock from the southern shore, and the departure of Smith sailing up to join him in front of Petersburg—were all conceived and combined by a single man, for a single purpose—gave significance and moral grandeur to the scene.

Everything now depended on the speedy capture of Petersburg, and as Grant had separated from his base at White House, and thus announced to Lee his intention of crossing the James, it was only by a sudden and prompt attack that he could hope to take the town. Smith's movement was directed against the north-east side, extending from the City Point to the Norfolk railroad. His force was in three divisions of infantry, and one of cavalry. Kautz was to threaten the line of works on the Norfolk road; Hinks, to take position across the Jordan's Point road, on the right of Kautz; Brooks, to follow Hinks, coming in at the centre of the line; and Martindale, to move along the Appomattox, and strike the City Point road. The woods were tangled and the ground was swampy, but the troops pressed on, and soon after daybreak, the advance confronted the rebel pickets. At six o'clock, as the column approached the City Point road, a rebel battery on Baylor's farm, six miles from Petersburg, opened fire; Kautz was at once sent forward to reconnoitre, and found a line of rifle trench, on rapidly rising ground, with a thicket, four hundred yards in width, extending along the front. The position was held by a regiment of cavalry, and one light battery. Smith promptly withdrew his own cavalry, and threw forward the colored division, and, after a spirited struggle, the rebels were driven off.

This affair delayed the movement about two hours, but before nine o'clock, the command was in motion again, and by eleven, the head of the column had arrived in front of Petersburg: at noon, the whole force was up. The works were stronger than Smith had supposed. A line of rifle-pits, connecting well-placed and formidable redans, ran irregularly, from the Appomattox, along the crests of several hills, about two miles outside the town, while the broad low valley in front was completely swept by the rebel artillery. Martindale now took the position assigned him, on the City Point road, and Brooks's division marched to a pine wood, within eight hundred yards of the rebel works; Hinks, however, was obliged to pass over an open space, exposed to a direct and cross fire, and an hour was consumed in forming line of battle, and advancing a quarter of a mile. The men could move only a few rods at a time, before they came within range of the rebel guns, and then were obliged to lie down, and wait for another opportunity. Soon, however, they would rise, push forward a few rods further, and again lie down. It was half-past one before they reached the ground from which the assault was to be made; and here they lay for five long hours, exposed to the ceaseless shelling of the enemy. No worse strain on the nerves of troops is possible; for it is harder to remain quiet under cannon-fire, even though comparatively harmless, than to advance against a storm of musketry.

Smith, though regarded by Grant and Meade as a brilliant soldier, was yet imbued with a spirit which, carried too far, is fatal to military success. He was over-anxious to prepare for every possible



contingency. His skill was great, his judgment cool, but his movements were somewhat too elaborate. He chose now to take no risk without minute and careful reconnoissance, and spent five hours, at this critical juncture, when every moment was of supreme importance, in examining the ground, posting his cavalry on the flanks, his batteries on commanding points, and forming his infantry divisions. He was baffled, moreover, by the enemy's artillery, and his own cannon-fire was silenced. Finally, he decided that an ordinary attack would be too venturesome, and, at about seven o'clock, threw forward more than half his troops in a strong skirmish line. With these he assaulted the works on the City Point and Prince George court-house roads. The rebels resisted with a sharp infantry fire, but the troops at the centre and left dashed into the works, consisting of five redans, on the crest of a deep and difficult ravine. Kiddoo's black regiment was one of the first to gain the hill. In support of this movement, the second line was swung around, and moved against the front of the remaining works. The rebels, assaulted thus in front and flank, gave way; four of the guns already captured were turned upon them by the negro conquerors, enfilading the line; and before dusk, Smith was in possession of the whole line of outer works, two and a half miles long, with fifteen pieces of artillery and three hundred prisoners. Petersburg was at his mercy. There was no force between him and the Appomattox river, except a part of Wise's brigade, and the defeated militia of the town, made up of old men and boys.

Meanwhile, Hancock was marching up on the

Prince George court-house road, to Smith's support ; but his maps were incorrect, and the inhabitants unable, or unwilling to afford him information. His orders were to march to Harrison's creek, about four miles out from Petersburg, in the direction of City Point : but Harrison's creek proved to be inside the rebel lines, and the point which Hancock was to reach did not exist at all. His officers, however, succeeded in finding negro guides, and the head of the column was turned to the right, at a point about six miles from Petersburg. This was before three o'clock in the afternoon. As the command neared Old court-house, a despatch was received from Grant, directing all haste to be made in proceeding to the assistance of Smith. A few moments later, a note from Smith himself was delivered, stating that he was authorized to call upon Hancock for support, and requesting that officer to advance as rapidly as possible. These despatches arrived just as the head of Birney's division was passing a country road leading towards Petersburg, and Birney and Gibbon were turned at once in that direction ; so that no time was lost.

The weather was hot, the roads were covered with clouds of dust, and but little water was found on the route ; but at five o'clock,\* the head of Birney's column had arrived at Bayley's creek, one

\* On the day of the fight, Hancock sent a despatch to Butler, saying : " My leading division connected with General Smith about five o'clock ; " but in his official report, dated fifteen months later, September 26, 1865, he states : " At 6.30 P.M., the head of Birney's division had arrived at the Bryant house, on Bailey's creek, about one mile in rear of the position of Hinks's division of the Eighteenth corps." Either hour was earlier than Smith's assault.

mile in rear of Hinks's division. Hancock here gave Birney and Gibbon directions to move forward as soon as they could ascertain at what point their assistance was needed, and himself rode on to confer with Smith, who pointed out, in the dusk of the evening, the part of the line he had carried. Hancock informed Smith that two divisions of the Second corps were close at hand, and ready for any further movements; but though superior in rank, he did not offer to assume command.

But Smith now made the greatest mistake of the campaign. Having carried the outer works of Petersburg, with a loss of only six hundred men; while the rebels were demoralized by disaster, and his own troops flushed with their brilliant victory; reinforced also by two divisions of the Second corps; the general whose reputation was at stake, who might now have captured the principal outwork and bulwark of Richmond, unwisely, and most unfortunately for himself, declined to proceed. With the same characteristic caution which he had displayed earlier in the day, he determined not to push his success until morning. He had heard that the rebels were rapidly crossing the James at Drury's Bluff, and although he had broken through the enemy's line, he deemed it wiser to hold his advantages than, by attempting to reach the bridges, to risk what he had gained. Hancock was simply requested to relieve Smith's forces in the line they had carried, so that the rebels might encounter fresh troops, in case of an attempt to retake the position. Birney and Gibbon were accordingly ordered to move up and occupy the captured line. This movement was



complete by eleven o'clock, but no further advance was made.

Smith was right in supposing that the rebels were hurrying to the defence of Petersburg; but for that very reason, it might have been imagined, he would have continued his own assaults. He also knew that further reinforcements from the army of the Potomac were on the way; a fact which secured him against the possibility of great disaster, and should have emboldened, not delayed him. There was a moon, and the fifteenth of June is nearly the longest day of the year: the ground was not unknown, for Kautz and Hinks had been engaged, only a week before, against the very portion of the line that was now assailed. A dashing soldier, like Sheridan, or Hancock himself, had he assumed command, would certainly have pushed the advantage so handsomely acquired;\* and nothing more was needed to capture Petersburg. Hancock, however, coming up after a victory, and unacquainted with the situation, waived his rank, leaving Smith to reap his laurels; while Smith, in his anxiety not to risk the result which had been attained, missed one of the most brilliant opportunities of the war.

\* "I claim that if Petersburg was garrisoned at that time only as is now believed, that *it should have been captured by the Eighteenth corps*, which was directed to assault the town with, I believe, 15,000 men; and *certainly with the assistance of the two divisions of the Second corps*, which I offered to General Smith just after dark on the 15th, these two divisions being then massed at Bryant's house on the left and rear of General Hinks's division, about one mile from General Smith's front line. Had I arrived before dark, and been able to have seen the general myself, *I should have taken decisive action.*"—Hancock to Assistant Adjutant-General, Army of the Potomac, June 26, 1864.

This day, Grant's head-quarters were removed to City Point, and, during the afternoon, the general-in-chief became satisfied that Lee was crossing the James, in force, near Drury's Bluff. He at once sent word to Meade, at Windmill Point, to dispatch another corps to Petersburg. "A night march," he said, "may be necessary." This order was received at six o'clock, and Burnside, still on the northern bank, was immediately put in motion, crossing the James by the pontoon bridge. Warren also was directed to ferry over at daylight, and proceed at once to Petersburg.

Lee, indeed, was moving, at last. Strangely enough, his whole force remained on the northern side of the James until the 15th, although Grant had withdrawn from Cold Harbor on the night of the 12th. The rebel chief must have been completely deceived by the movement of Warren towards White Oak swamp, for otherwise, it is hardly possible that he would not have marched at once to Petersburg. Beauregard, however, had a clearer perception of the situation, and telegraphed to Richmond, as he had done six days before, that he could not hold both Petersburg and the lines in front of Butler, unless reinforced. He received a single brigade, under Gracie, with which he relieved the troops at Bermuda Hundred, throwing them into the works at Petersburg, where he himself arrived soon after Smith's assault. Finding so large a national force in his front, he now directed Gracie to move secretly from his entrenchments at Bermuda Hundred, and deceiving Butler, if possible, with a line of pickets, to march with all haste to Petersburg. Gracie obeyed, but early in the morn-

ing, the evacuation was discovered, and Butler promptly ordered an advance along his whole line, under Terry. The troops pushed forward as far as the Petersburg railroad, and succeeded in tearing it up for several miles ; but Lee's army was now coming up in force, and Terry fell back, still holding, however, the rebel entrenchments, which commanded the railroad. As soon as Grant was apprised of this advantage, he ordered two divisions of the Sixth corps, now coming up the James on transports, to disembark on the northern side of the Appomattox, and reinforce Butler.

Before daybreak, the rebels were entering Petersburg in force. Hancock had directed Birney and Gibbon to advance in the night, and seize all the ground between their front and the river ; but these instructions were not complied with,\* and it was not until six o'clock that Birney and Gibbon advanced ; by that time, the enemy had brought up a large body of fresh troops, and occupied and strengthened commanding positions, so that nothing serious was attempted by the Second corps. Barlow's division, which had lost its way in the night, arrived before dawn, and took position on Hancock's left. The whole Second corps was now on the left of Smith.

Grant had remained at City Point, in order to be near both Butler and Meade, and it was almost morning when he learned the failure of Smith to push his victory. He rode out at once to Petersburg. But by this time, the enemy was in force, and it was no longer Petersburg militia, but the veterans of the rebel army, who were before him.

\* Hancock's Report.



The Ninth corps, now coming up, was directed to take position on Hancock's left, so that the line ran, from right to left—Smith, Hancock, Burnside; while Warren was also advancing from Windmill Point.\* As Burnside, after marching all night, was obliged to rest his men, an attack was not ordered until six o'clock in the evening; but Hancock, who, in the absence of Meade, was senior in rank, was instructed to take advantage of any weakness shown by the enemy. It was still uncertain whether Lee would not attack Bermuda Hundred in force, and Grant returned to City Point, to direct the movements of Butler. On the way, he met Meade, and ordered him to proceed at once to the front, and assume command of all the troops before Petersburg, including the Eighteenth corps, which belonged to Butler's army. Meade was instructed, if possible, to drive the enemy across the Appomattox.

He arrived on the field at two o'clock, and at six, the assault was made, according to Grant's orders. The entire Second corps advanced, supported by two brigades of Burnside, and two of the Eighteenth corps; Smith reporting an advance on his front to be inexpedient, was ordered to demonstrate only. The movement was spirited, and after a short con-

\* "Hurry Warren up by the nearest road, to reach the Jerusalem plank road, about three miles out from Petersburg. As soon as you receive this, and can give the necessary directions, start yourself by steamer, and get here to take command in person. Leave your head-quarters train to follow by land. Put Wright in charge of all left behind, with directions to get the trains over as rapidly as possible, to be followed by the cavalry; the cavalry to cut in, as soon as the last wagon gets within Wright's lines."  
—Grant to Meade, June 16, 10.15 A.M.

flict, Hancock succeeded in driving the enemy back for some distance along the whole line, capturing an advanced work, but no more definite result was attained. Advantage, however, was taken of the fine moonlight, to press the enemy all night, and the rebels in return made several vigorous attempts to retake the ground they had lost, but were foiled; for the national troops entrenched at once, and repelled all efforts to dislodge them. At early dawn on the 17th, a gallant assault was made by the Ninth corps, which resulted in the capture of an important redoubt, with four guns, several colors, and four hundred prisoners. Before daylight, the Fifth corps arrived, and was posted on the left of Burnside,\* while a division of Wright also came up, and relieved Brooks's division of the Eighteenth corps, which was sent, under Smith, to Bermuda Hundred. This left Martindale in command of the two remaining divisions of the Eighteenth corps, now under Meade.

All day, on the 17th, the movement went on. The rebels were vigorously pressed, Martindale pushing them back on the right, and the whole line was gradually advanced, but no great success was attained. The hardest fighting was done by the

\* "The existing position is that Burnside is preparing to renew the attack, and Warren is taking position to cover our left flank, placing one division in line of battle, and holding the balance of his corps to meet any attack on our left flank. . . I have reason to believe that two thousand will cover our casualties up to this moment.

"The Ninth corps deserve great credit for their attack this morning, as they were marching all yesterday and the night before, and had no rest last night, being formed preparatory to attacking."—*Meade to Grant, June 17.*

Ninth corps, which carried an important position, but lost it again in the night.\*

This day Butler was attacked by Pickett's division, on its way to Petersburg, and with such vigor that the rebels regained the ground they had abandoned the day before. Grant had directed Butler by all means to hold this line. "It seems to me important that we should hold our advantage gained yesterday, and maintain a position commanding the road between Petersburg and Richmond. With such advantage, it seems to me, we can always force a heavy column between the two cities, and force the enemy to abandon one or the other." Wright was accordingly sent, with two divisions, to Bermuda Hundred; and Butler ordered him at once to the front, to regain the ground which had been lost. On the 17th, at 9.45 P.M., Grant said to Butler: "Has anything been done this evening towards occupying the ground held this morning? I was in hopes, after gaining the railroad, you would be able to fortify a position that would command it, and render it useless to the enemy. If this is yet within your power, I want it done." But Wright sent word that it

\* "Burnside made, about three P.M., an attack, with Wilcox's division, which succeeded in gaining a position in advance of the works taken this morning by Potter. This evening, at eight P.M., a third attack was made by Ledlie, of Burnside's corps, which resulted in carrying a line of entrenchments, which prisoners say is the enemy's main and last line at that place. . . Warren immediately sent in two divisions to support and hold Burnside's acquisition."—*Meade to Grant, June 17, 9 P.M.*

"Ledlie was forced back last night from the advanced position he had taken. His command suffered quite severely in the attack."—*Meade to Grant, June 18.*



was doubtful whether he could hold the line in his front, even if it was carried, and did not make the attempt, although it was positively ordered. He doubtless feared that the rebels, now passing in force towards Petersburg, might divert a sufficient number, at any time, to overwhelm him. Instead, therefore, of advancing, he sent back for further orders, and this great opportunity was also lost.

Grant was informed of this new misfortune about midnight, between the 17th and 18th; and at one o'clock, he wrote to Butler, who had proposed another advance: "As you were unable to make the attack at the time first ordered, you will suspend the attack you have ordered to be made between this and daylight; but hold all your troops in readiness to take advantage of any weakening of the enemy in your front, that may be caused by their withdrawal of troops to reinforce Petersburg against an attack by Meade in the morning." But no lessening of the force in front of Butler was reported, and no further attack was made by the troops under his command.

The assault along Meade's front was ordered for daylight on the 18th, and, at the appointed time, the troops advanced; but the enemy had retired, in the night, to a position about a mile nearer Petersburg. Orders were immediately given to follow and develop this new line; and as soon as dispositions could be made, to assault. About noon, an unsuccessful attack was made by Gibbon's division, of the Second corps. Martindale, however, obtained possession of the ground occupied by the enemy's skirmish line, and took some prisoners. At this

juncture, Hancock was obliged to relinquish command of the Second corps, owing to the reopening of an old wound. Birney accordingly took temporary command. He organized a formidable column, and, at about four o'clock, attempted an assault, but without success, for Lee was now present with his entire army. Later in the day, attacks were made by the Fifth and Ninth corps, with no better results. Petersburg remained in the possession of Lee.

All of these assaults had been made under the personal supervision of Meade, for Grant remained at City Point, which was central to both his armies. He simply gave the general order, and Meade directed all details. These were indeed Meade's battles, and although they failed, he seldom, if ever, appeared to greater advantage. His despatches, on the 18th, especially, are full of fire and vigor. "Say to Burnside, the best way to get out of the enfilading fire is to go ahead." "I think there is too much time taken in preparation, and I fear the enemy will make more of the delay than we can." "Select your own point of attack, but do not lose any time in examination." "I hope you are going to-day, to outdo yesterday." "I am greatly astonished at your despatch of two P.M. What additional order to attack do you require? My orders have been explicit, and are now repeated, that you each immediately assault the enemy, with all your force, and if there is any further delay, the responsibility and its consequences will rest with you." Ringing words! They bring up Meade vividly to those who knew him well. Tall, restless, angular, with piercing eye, aquiline nose, rapid gait, and nervous manner—he looked every inch a soldier. He was ill-tempered, and impatient,

but his ill-temper often made him say good things ; and his very impatience and testiness, disagreeable though they were, contributed to his talent ; for talent of a high order he unquestionably possessed. Unjust at times, as every intense soldier is apt to be, when his orders are not carried out—for reproof will come, even though the fault is not with him who is reproved—yet Meade did ample justice afterwards. After this very battle, he said to the men he had censured : “Sorry to hear you cannot carry the works. Get the best line you can, and be prepared to hold it. I suppose you cannot make any more attacks, and I feel satisfied all has been done that can be done.”

This day he was a great man ; and the ablest is not great every day of his life. During the battle, when peremptory orders did not avail, he almost implored his corps commanders. “I have sent a positive order to Generals Burnside and Warren to attack at all hazards, with their whole force. I find it useless to appoint an hour to effect co-operation, and I am therefore compelled to give you the same order. You have a large corps, powerful and numerous. I beg you will at once, as soon as possible, assault in a strong column. The day is fast going, and I wish the practicability of carrying the enemy’s line settled before dark.” It was indeed hard to see a great opportunity slipping from his grasp, the fate of a campaign balancing before his eyes, while the delay of a subordinate,—the cause unknown—jeopardized all his plans, and precipitated disappointment, and perhaps disaster. No moments can be more painful to a commander than these, when, not being able himself to lead a corps into the fight, and merge anxiety in the excitement of a



charge—he must hold his breath—not for results, but for the arrival of troops, the starting of commands, the completion of combinations on which everything depends. The agony of suspense then transcends almost every sensation that can come to a quick and sensitive nature, while responsibility is the force behind which pushes the knife to the nerve. Meade was the very man to feel all this acutely.

Still, the intensity of the emotions often seems to sharpen the intellect, in a really strong nature. Such an one is not overcome by an emergency, but lifted into higher power and more splendid effort, and a man does grander things than he is aware of. For the moralists may say what they will, there is something in war that appeals to the higher nature in man. Not only in the nobility of obedience and discipline, not only in the grandeur of self-abnegation, the fortitude under reverse, the long-suffering of hunger, want of sleep, fatigue, cold, rain, dust, heat, thirst, wounds,—but in the actual din and rush of battle, in the victory of the mortal, shrinking part of our nature over the dread of imminent peril, the advance again and again to present death, there is a consciousness, far away from vanity, that these are things which other men call glorious. If it were not so, armies could never be led into battle twice.

This day, however, the national troops had to content themselves with the glory of sustained effort under disaster. They knew something of the solace that Lee's soldiers more often took to themselves—that they had deserved success. Meade said, when all was over: "It is useless to make another attack, because I doubt your or my ability to follow it up;"

and again: "I am quite satisfied we have done all that it is possible for men to do, and must be resigned to the result." The assaults had been vigorous, but their only result was to force the enemy into an interior line from which he could not be dislodged. The losses on the three days had been nearly six thousand.\*

There was thus disappointment on every hand, though the combinations of the chief were skilful, and the action of the men had been gallant and prompt. The prodigious exertions of the troops, however, were telling on their physical strength. Marching night and day, in the extreme heat of June, and only arriving in front of Petersburg, or Bermuda Hundred, to fight again, day after day, and night after night—a marked falling off in their energy was perceptible. The assaults of Hancock and Burnside were especially heavy, the commanders were zealous, and, at first, important successes had been achieved; but it could not be disguised that the men were too weary for further assaults. All the corps commanders reported that the troops did not attack with the same spirit as in the Wilderness.

The general-in-chief was greatly chagrined at the failure of Smith to capture Petersburg. The plan of the movement had been to take that place by surprise; and when, on the 15th, Grant ascertained that Lee was still on the northern side of the James, while Smith and Hancock were combined, with nearly forty thousand men, in front of Petersburg, he looked upon victory as

\*. The medical director reported 4,600 wounded; according to the usual estimate, this would give 1,000 killed; and there were not 500 captured.

assured. Even after the early success of Smith had been left unimproved, it was still possible by further attacks to secure the capture of the place, before Lee's entire army could arrive. The assaults of the 16th, 17th, and 18th were all made with this idea; for if the rebels were not at once dislodged, it was apparent that a long and tedious siege must follow; in fact, a new series of combinations would become necessary, and a chilling disappointment fall upon the spirit of the North. Every effort was therefore made south of the Appomattox; and, when an unexpected opportunity was offered in front of Bermuda Hundred, Butler was urged again and again to hold what he had acquired, and even to retake the position, after it had slipped from his grasp. He seemed, indeed, to appreciate the importance of his prize, but did not succeed in retaining it, and, at the end of three days, the rebels again held the railway between Petersburg and Richmond, and all the great avenues connecting the Confederacy and its capital were in their control.

But, if the well-laid plans of the national commander had thus been doubly and trebly foiled, Lee had by no means displayed consummate generalship. He made at the outset the grave mistake, which came so near being fatal, of remaining north of the James, till Grant had arrived in front of Petersburg; and, even after starting from Cold Harbor, his alacrity was not conspicuous. It was not until the morning of the 18th, that his principal columns again confronted the army of the Potomac; and he himself only arrived in Petersburg on that day.\*

\* "Occupied last night my new lines, without impediment. Ker-shaw's division arrived about 7.30, and Field's about 9.30. They



It was Beauregard who saved the town. It was he who foresaw the intention of Grant, and brought the troops from Bermuda Hundred without orders, neglecting, or rather risking the lesser place, to secure that which was all-important; massing and strengthening the inner works, on the night of the 15th, and, afterwards, holding Meade and Smith at bay, until Lee arrived in force. Then, the combined rebel army, amounting to sixty thousand men,\* again on the defensive, and again behind earthworks, was able to withstand the attacks of the wearied veterans who were brought up, after their march of fifty miles, to still renewed assaults.

On the 18th, Grant said to Meade: "I think, after the present assault, unless a decided advantage presents itself, our men should have rest, protecting themselves as well as possible. If this assault does not carry, we will try to gain advantages without assaulting fortifications." At ten o'clock on the same evening, he said: "I am perfectly satisfied that all has been done that could be done, and that the assaults to-day were called for by all the appearance and information that could be obtained. Now, we will rest the men, and use the spade for their protection, till a new vein can be struck."

Although Petersburg had not been captured, the movement across the James was one of the most successfully executed of all the strategical operations of Grant. The secret withdrawal from Lee's front, the removal of Smith to White House, are being placed in position. All comparatively quiet this morning. General Lee has just arrived."—*Beauregard to Bragg, June 18, 11.30 A.M.*

\* See Lee's field return for June 30.

and of the army of the Potomac, first, to the Chickahominy, and then, to the James ; the masking of the operation by Wilson and Warren ; the passage of the James, at a point seven hundred yards across, without the loss of a man or beast—part of the army on ferry-boats, and part by the pontoon bridge ; the protection, and march, and crossing of the great supply train ; the arrival of Smith at Bermuda Hundred, on transports, and his march to the front of Petersburg ; the advance of Hancock on the southern bank, and his junction with Smith, in ample time to have combined in the assault ; the subsequent approach of Burnside and Warren ; the dispatch of Wright to Butler's front ; and, finally, the arrival of the army train, and the transfer of the base from White House to City Point—constitute one of the finest achievements in logistics during the war.

Great credit for the execution is due to Grant's various subordinates. Meade and his chief of staff, Humphreys, issued admirable orders for the details of the movement ; Benham and Weitzel, who built the bridge, accomplished a marvel of engineering skill ; Ingalls, the chief quartermaster, displayed absolute genius in the movement of the trains ; Butler was energetic and efficient, in preparing for the passage of the army of the Potomac, and dispatching Smith to Petersburg ; Smith himself marched and embarked, and disembarked and marched again, with zeal and promptness ; Warren protected and concealed the operation with admirable success ; Hancock and Burnside crossed the river, and then moved and manœuvred with alacrity and skill ; and the men themselves never flagged nor failed. Every one was earnest, every one did his best,

till the fatal moment that lost the result which all had been striving for, which had indeed been absolutely attained, all but secured ; when Smith, having won Petersburg, hesitated to grasp his prize. Then, indeed, when all their exertions had proved fruitless, when, having out-marched and out-manœuvred Lee, the soldiers found themselves again obliged to assault entrenched positions—then, they seemed in some degree to lose heart, and for the first time since the campaign began, their attacks were lacking in vigor ; when they found the army of Northern Virginia again in their front, sheltered by formidable breastworks, their zeal was lessened, and their ardor cooled. Had the assaults in front of Petersburg been made with the same spirit as in the Wilderness, Petersburg would even then have fallen. But it was not in human endurance to hold out in this incessant effort, and the limit had for a time been reached.

Grant, however, had arrived on the south side of the James, where, at the outset of the campaign, he expected and desired to arrive. He was fighting it out on the line which he had originally declared his intention to assume. He had acquired and maintained a position threatening the railways which connected Lee and Richmond with the outside Confederacy ; and this in itself was an achievement worth all it cost. He had arrived too, after depleting Lee's army, and had no fears for his own communications ; he had established a new base, indeed a great depôt, at City Point. But it was now certain that to complete his task and obtain possession of Petersburg and the railroads, would require operations of the nature of a siege. He



must hold the ground he had won in front of the town, and stretching out to the left, seek to envelop Petersburg, striking first the Weldon, and then the Southside road. All this was sure to take time, and after the fierce encounters and exhausting battles north of the James, there came a need for the patience and persistency, under negative circumstances, which are rarer traits, and more difficult to exercise, than the grandest defiance of danger in an advance.\*

\* An attempt has been made to show that the failure to capture Petersburg, on the 15th of June, was owing to the neglect of Grant to apprise his subordinates, Meade and Hancock, that the town was to be attacked that day, and that in consequence Hancock did not arrive in time. But Hancock himself announced to Butler that his leading division connected with Smith at five o'clock, and the assault did not occur till seven. He also states that the town could have been captured after Smith's assault.

On the 26th of June, however, induced, as he declares, by newspaper criticisms, as well as by statements of the Secretary of War, Hancock requested a formal investigation; and in forwarding this request, General Meade made use of the following language: "Had General Hancock and myself been apprised in time of the contemplated movement against Petersburg and the necessity of his co-operation, I am of the opinion that he could have been pushed much earlier to the scene of operations; but as matters occurred, and with our knowledge of them, I do not see how any censure can be attached to General Hancock and his corps." Hancock's letter of the 26th contained no word implying that he had been left in ignorance of the object of his movement; but more than a year afterwards, in his official report, he said: "The messages from Lieutenant-General Grant and from General Smith which I received between five and six P.M., on the 15th, were the first and only intimations I had that Petersburg was to be attacked that day. Up to that hour I had not been notified from any source that I was expected to assist General Smith in assaulting that city."

The idea that either Meade or Hancock was ignorant that

an attack on Petersburg was contemplated, or for what purpose the Second corps was pressed, *without rations*, against the great strategic position which covered Richmond, is one which the military reputation of either officer at once refutes.

There is, however, no room for surmise. On the 14th of June, at eight P.M., after returning from Bermuda Hundred, Grant wrote to Butler: "General Hancock's corps, numbering about 28,000 men, will be all over to the south side of the James river at Windmill Point, before daylight, and will march in the morning direct for Petersburg, with directions to halt at the point on that road nearest City Point, unless he receives further orders. If the force going into Petersburg find reinforcements necessary, by sending back to General Hancock, he will push forward. The rations of the Second corps (Hancock) will be sent to-morrow morning. It will be impossible to supply him from here earlier than that. To have this corps ready for service, you will please direct your commissary to send down by boat to Windmill Point to-night, 60,000 rations, to issue to them. Without this precaution the services of this corps cannot be had for *an emergency to-morrow*."

The same evening Grant communicated his plans to Meade in conversation, as was often the case, and directed him to send the Second corps forward; and at half-past eight, Meade ordered Hancock to "cross his corps to the south side of the James." At half-past nine, he said: "You need not spend any time in taking up a line, but hold yourself ready to move, as you may receive orders to march to Petersburg, in which case rations will be sent you from City Point." And again, at ten o'clock: "General Butler has been ordered to send to you at Windmill Point, 60,000 rations. So soon as these are received and issued you will move your corps by the most direct route to Petersburg, taking up a position where the City Point railroad crosses Harrison's creek, at the cross roads indicated on the map at this point, and extend your right towards the mouth of Harrison's creek, where we now have a work." At 7.30 A.M., on the 15th: "You will not wait for rations, but move immediately to the position assigned you last evening. . . It is important that you should move."

At 6.30 P.M., on the 15th, *before Meade could have heard of Hancock's arrival at the front*, he ordered Burnside to "cross the river immediately and move up to Harrison's creek, and form on Hancock's left. Harrison's creek is about two and a half miles from Petersburg. General W. F. Smith advanced on Petersburg

this morning, and *has been engaged with the enemy all day.* Hancock left this morning for the same place or Harrison's creek, *and is supporting Smith.* The commanding general directs that you do the same."

Immediately after Grant's arrival at Bermuda Hundred on the 15th, he said to Butler: "No rations arrived yet for Hancock. I started him, however, this morning, on the road to Petersburg, with directions to stop at Harrison's creek, unless he should receive other orders." Butler replied: "If General Hancock advances to Harrison's creek . . he will be within one mile of Smith's point of attack, and can afford aid." Again, at 3.30 p.m., Grant said to Butler: "The Second corps, 28,000 strong, was directed to march this morning, on the direct road from Windmill Point to Petersburg, stopping at Harrison's creek, in the absence of further orders. . . I have sent back orders to hurry up this corps. If you require it, send back to General Hancock, under cover to General Gibbon, with directions for him to read, and the corps will push forward with all speed."

In his official report, Meade says: "In the evening [June 14th], orders were sent to Major-General Hancock to move *early the next morning and take position in front of Petersburg.*" "Hancock moved without the supplies, his leading division, under Birney, reporting to Major-General W. F. Smith, *about an hour before that officer's attack on the enemy.*"

Hancock's official report declares: "I had been directed by General Meade, on the evening of the 14th, to hold my troops in readiness to march forwards to Petersburg." Again: "I notified the commanding general that the expected rations had not arrived, and that I had given orders for my troops to move at once. The order was approved." Once more: "I was instructed to push forward to the position designated for my command behind Harrison's creek."

Hancock moved exactly as he had been ordered; and when six miles from Petersburg, received Grant's orders to advance in support of Smith. He did advance promptly, connecting with that commander, "about five o'clock." The combination was complete. Grant found no fault with Meade or Hancock, and so informed them, stating that no investigation was necessary. To the intimation that they had not been properly informed of his plans, he made no reply. On his recommendation, they were both subsequently promoted to the rank of major-general in the regular army.



## CHAPTER XXI.

Depression of spirit at the North—Lincoln's visit to the front—Enthusiasm of black troops—Dispositions to envelop Petersburg—Movement of 22nd of June—Advance towards Weldon road—Gap between Sixth and Second corps—Advantage taken by rebels—Loss of prisoners and guns by Birney—Lee returns to his lines—Further movements of Wright—Dissatisfaction of Meade—Wright's working parties reach the Weldon road—Connection between Richmond and Weldon interrupted—Anxiety of Lee—Consternation of rebel government—Threatening movements of Grant—Operations of Hunter—Vigor of rebels—Sheridan's raid—Battle at Trevillian station—Defeat of rebels—Hunter moves westward instead of east—Sheridan resolves to return—Fighting of 12th of June—Destruction of railroad—Circuitous route of cavalry—Sheridan reaches White House—Abercrombie in danger—Sheridan relieves him—Battle at St. Mary's church—Gregg saves the trains—Sheridan arrives at the James—Movement of Wilson against Southside and Danville roads—Grant directs abandonment of all aggressive operations outside of Georgia and Virginia—Sherman's anxiety about communications—Defeat of Sturgis in Mississippi—Grant working out his original plan—Rebel cavalry pursues Wilson—Anxiety of Grant and Meade—Dispositions to succor Wilson—Wilson's raid—Destruction of Southside and Danville roads—Fighting near Nottoway court-house—Affair at Staunton river bridge—Wilson's return—Battle at Ream's station—Wilson opposed by infantry as well as cavalry—Rout of national cavalry—Flight of Wilson—Loss of guns and men—Arrival in national lines—Cause of disaster—Damage inflicted on enemy—Uses and character of raids.

THE spirit of the North was greatly depressed when it was discovered that by crossing the James, Grant had absolutely moved further away from Richmond. The strategical importance of the new position and of the railways was not apparent to the unmilitary mind, which only perceived that Peters-

burg, with all its works, now lay between Grant and the rebel capital, whereas, a week before, the national army had been within six miles of the prize. Places affect the ordinary imagination more strongly than armies; it was Richmond on which the loyal people of the North had set their hearts, and they could hardly comprehend that Lee's army was more important than any town, or even that by destroying Lee, Richmond would be secured.

The President, however, was staunch, and came to the rescue at once. As soon as he saw clearly himself the purpose of Grant, he dispatched an approving message; and the next day, addressed a public meeting at Philadelphia, in these words: "We are going through with our task, so far as I am concerned, if it takes us three years longer. I have not been in the habit of making predictions, but I am almost tempted now to hazard one. I will. It is that Grant is this morning in a position, with Meade and Hancock, of Pennsylvania, whence he will never be dislodged by the enemy, till Richmond is taken." This support was invaluable to Grant, and it did not end in words.

On the 21st of June, the President visited the lieutenant-general and the armies, riding out to the front of both Meade and Butler's commands. On his way back from the army of the Potomac, he passed through the black troops of the Eighteenth corps, which had fought so gallantly in the first assaults on Petersburg. They crowded around him, anxious to see the man who had liberated them, and cheers and cries of joy and affection arose on every hand. These men who had been slaves, pressing up in the garb of soldiers, to bless and look upon him who

was now *their* President and chief, made a sight to impress the dullest imagination. The simple blacks laughed, and cried, and in their broken English called him "Massa Lincoln," "Massa President," "Fader Abraham," and sought to shake or kiss his hand, or touch his garments or his horse; and Abraham Lincoln rode bareheaded among his colored soldiers.

Immediately after the failure of the assaults on the 18th of June, Grant began his dispositions to envelop Petersburg, and strike the Southern railroads. Wright's entire command had been restored to Meade, and Martindale's to Butler, so that the organization of each army was complete. Brooks was placed in command of the Tenth corps, from which Gillmore had been relieved; Ferrero was released from the duty of guarding trains, in which his division had been engaged since the beginning of the campaign, and reported to Burnside; and Ledlie superseded Crittenden in the command of a division in the Ninth corps.

Butler was now ordered to extend his line as far as possible to the left, not only holding Bermuda Hundred neck, but relieving the Sixth corps, immediately south of the Appomattox river. The Sixth and Second corps were withdrawn entirely from the lines, which Smith, Burnside, and Warren were to hold, fortifying their front, and extending as far as the Jerusalem plank road, on the left; the siege train was ordered from Washington, and regular approaches were begun in front of Burnside; while Birney and Wright were directed to hold themselves in readiness for a movement to the left, to seize the Weldon road, and if possible, reach the Appomattox, west of Petersburg. The Second corps took position on the



left of Warren, and Wright on the extreme left of the army. The enemy apparently stretched out as rapidly as Meade; for Lee knew as well as Grant what must be the object, and what the next movement of the national army, and constructed earth-works in advance, to be occupied whenever occasion should arise. Thus, on the night of the 21st of June, the Second and Sixth corps were immediately in front of a large force of the enemy.

On the morning of the 22nd, Birney, still in command of the Second corps, was moved westward. The idea was to cross the Weldon road, and then swing around to the Appomattox river, above the town.\* Wright also advanced on the extreme left, by a road that separated him somewhat from Birney, and soon found the enemy's skirmishers in considerable force. Fearing that Birney would become exposed, Meade now ordered Barlow, who had the left of the Second corps, to be moved back, so as to connect with Wright. While engaged in this manœuvre, Barlow was vigorously attacked by a portion of Hill's corps, which penetrated the gap between him and Wright, taking his command in reverse, throwing it into great confusion, and capturing many prisoners. At the same time, Gibbon, holding Birney's right, was very warmly assailed, and forced back from his front line, with the loss of four

\* "You can move your corps, taking position on the left of the Fifth corps, and extending as far to the left as practicable, enveloping and keeping as close as possible to the enemy's line. I hope you will be able to get possession of the Weldon railroad, though it is possible the enemy may attempt to cover and defend it. . . . I will send the Sixth corps to-night, to take post on your left, and desire to stretch across to the Appomattox."—*Meade to Birney, June 21.*

guns. Order, however, was soon restored, for the rebels made no attempt to follow up the advantage they had gained; but Meade, nevertheless, directed the withdrawal of Wright, in order to effect a secure connection with Birney. This affair occurred between three and five in the afternoon. At seven, the national line again advanced; and, on the left and centre, the enemy was pressed back for some distance, but on the right, no advantage was gained. The whole engagement had no other result than the loss of four guns, and about sixteen hundred prisoners,\* most of whom were taken from the Second corps. About one hundred rebels were captured, and during the night, Lee fell back to his fortifications.

At daylight on the 23rd, the Sixth and Second corps again advanced; Wright found no enemy in his front, and Birney only a strong skirmish line on the right centre and right. This was forced back, and the right of the Second corps occupied the position it had held the day before. The whole line then advanced, pivoting on Gibbon, his division being close to the main line of the enemy, and west of the Jerusalem plank road. The country was a densely wooded thicket, and the necessity, now so obvious, of maintaining the closest possible connection, made the process long and tedious.

While the Sixth corps was moving into position, a heavy column of the enemy was discovered in motion towards the national left. Meade promptly notified Wright, and directed him, if the enemy threatened, to take the initiative, and attack at once,

\* The number of prisoners taken in this engagement is said, by those who always exaggerate the national losses, to have been 2,500. The statement in the text is taken from Lee's report to his government.

unless such a course would endanger his own flank. About four p.m., Wright reported the appearance of the rebels in force, on his left, and that his own advance had been driven in, as well as a working party engaged in destroying the railroad. Meade at once reiterated his orders to attack with promptness; but instead of attacking, Wright permitted the rebels to move at will, until he became alarmed, not only for his flank, but for his rear, and called for reinforcements. Meade again urged him to attack at all hazards, and received for reply that there was no time to form columns. He then ordered an attack in line, but darkness was the excuse. As the position was faulty, and Meade could get no information, except that Wright believed the enemy to be in great force on his flank, he finally authorized the withdrawal of the Sixth corps to the position occupied the night before, which was better fitted for manœuvring. In reporting this day's operations to Grant, Meade concluded by saying: "I think you had better come up here to-morrow, if convenient."\*

Meade was now extremely anxious about his left, which was so extended that the rebels could easily concentrate upon him at that point, while he had no reinforcements to oppose. At the same time, the further the left advanced, the greater was the danger to the centre and rear, which of course became more and more exposed. "If attacked by superior force," he said, "Wright will have to withdraw, doubling upon Birney, who will then reinforce him, as his line would be reached by the movement." A

\* The account in the text of the operations of these two days is taken almost verbatim from Meade's despatches to Grant, of June 22nd and 23rd.



body of cavalry, about eight hundred strong, had been detached from Wilson's command, to watch this flank ; but this was insufficient, and a few days later, Meade said : "To secure the rear of the army and prevent annoyance from cavalry raids, the enemy's cavalry must either be occupied, or a force must be stationed on our left and rear."

On the 22nd of June, the day of Birney's ill fortune, Grant was at Bermuda Hundred, with Butler's army ; and all these operations against the Weldon road had been conducted exclusively by Meade, to whom Grant now intended to allow a more absolute control of the movements of his own army than he had hitherto enjoyed. But so far, the result was not encouraging. The gap between Wright and Birney was most unfortunate, and should certainly have been avoided ;\* while on the 23rd, Meade seemed utterly unable to control the operations of Wright, and was obliged to request the presence of Grant. Lee, on the other hand, had been prompt to perceive the exposure of the national army, and with more alacrity than he had displayed for weeks, threw in two divisions against Barlow, and moved another simultaneously against Gibbon.† He showed himself in this instance more than a match for Meade. It must, however, be said for Meade, that he felt the loss of Hancock, at the head of the Second corps ; Birney was quite unequal to such a com-

\* Yet Meade had taken precautions against this very danger. On the 21st, he said to Wright : "Birney has had a cavalry detachment of some eight hundred men for purposes of reconnoissance, to-day, and can probably give you information respecting the ground on his left."

† Meade reported that prisoners were captured from all three divisions of Hill's corps.

mand. His failure in the assaults of the 18th, and his handling of the corps, on the 22nd, were evidence enough of this incapacity; while Wright's unwillingness or inability to advance on the 23rd, though, doubtless, in part occasioned by the lack of spirit of the men, which reacted on their commander, frustrated all of Meade's designs. Indeed, when one considers on what the chances of war depend—the weather, roads, bridges; the physical condition of troops; their discipline, valor, experience; the skill of officers; the character and temper, the ambitions and spite of generals; the slowness of some, and the rashness of others; the failure of many to grasp, or even to perceive their opportunities—to say nothing of the numbers, and resources, and position of the enemy—the marvel is that success is ever attained.

The Weldon railway was now not absolutely held, but Wright's working parties had reached it, and the army of the Potomac was so near that Lee could not hope to use the road for supplying Richmond, or his own command. On the 21st of June, he reported, from Petersburg, to Seddon, the rebel Secretary of War: "It will be almost impossible to preserve the connection between this place and Weldon."\* This announcement created the greatest consternation

\* "It will be almost impossible to preserve the connection between this place and Weldon. It is of the last importance then that the Danville, Piedmont, and Southside roads be well stocked . . . and also to have these roads guarded as effectually as possible against raiding parties of the enemy. . . . Without this I do not see what can be done to protect our railroad communications, which are of vital importance to us. Allow me to urge this subject and that of stocking the roads upon your immediate attention."

in the rebel cabinet. On the 24th, the Secretary replied: "I hear with regret and apprehension the doubt expressed by you, of your ability to maintain communication by the Petersburg and Weldon line. Without it there must be great difficulty in maintaining adequate supplies for the army. . . . The sorest strait is just now, and you will excuse me for invoking your utmost attention and thought to the maintenance of our present communications."\*

The opinions of Lee, however, remained unchanged, and, on the 26th, he said: "There is no doubt in my mind as to the [im] practicability of continuing that road in operation. The enemy's left wing is within a few miles of it, at any time, and at any point; and although the road has as yet sustained little damage, it is impossible, under present circumstances, to operate it. The safe passage of the trains could not be relied on. If the Danville road cannot be made to supply our wants, we shall inevitably suffer. . . . If this cannot be done, I see no way of averting the terrible disaster that will ensue."

The rebels had no doubt that Grant had reached the point where his presence was to them the greatest possible danger. Now, that their communications northward were all severed, or of no avail, while Grant's, on the contrary, were liable to no interruption; secure as he was, with his water base

\* Seddon went on to say: "The single line of the Danville road at best could give only a meagre supply, but it is besides liable constantly on so long a line, to temporary interruptions and obstructions by the enemy. If successful in guarding the important bridges, it will be hardly possible to prevent raiding parties from reaching and tearing up the track at more accessible and unguarded points."



at City Point ; holding Petersburg fast, so as to require the constant presence and watchfulness of Lee, and yet able to break at will the lines without which Lee could not remain one week in Richmond, —the position of the national general was one that menaced not only the army of Northern Virginia, but the very existence of the Confederacy. He could very well afford to sustain such checks as those on the Weldon road, while the Weldon road itself was interrupted, and the other lines, by which Lee and his government set such store, were being broken up by the cavalry. For at the very time when these letters were passing between Seddon and the rebel chief, Wilson had been sent out against the western railways, and had done great damage not only to the Weldon, but to the Southside, and even the Danville road :\* Averill had broken up many miles of the western road, a month before, and Hunter had now reached it again, beyond Lynchburg ; so that, absolutely, every railroad leading into Richmond was cut. Although Grant had not succeeded entirely in his designs, though his plans were delayed, they were approaching fulfilment ; and if his situation was not all that he desired, the misery inflicted on the enemy was great, and the rebels appreciated better than the people of the North, the straits to which they were reduced, and the danger of absolute ruin that stared at them on every side.

On the 25th, Seddon made another appeal to Lee. All the local troops of Richmond had been sent to the trenches, as long ago as the 2nd of June,

\* Speaking of the Danville road, Lee said : “ That road is also subject to inroads by the enemy, and will no doubt be injured, as at present, by the expeditions organized against it.”

in the terror which Grant's movements inspired; and were now serving north of the James, releasing the garrison of veterans for the field. But this local force was composed of the clerks in the departments, and of other subordinate officials, whose despatch to the front impeded, or absolutely brought to a stop the daily and indispensable operations of the government; and Seddon wrote: "We are suffering here very serious inconvenience from the retention in the defences of the local forces. Their absence greatly impairs the vigor of administration in almost every department of the government; and the heads of all the administrative branches are urgent for their recall." The capital must have been absolutely stripped, for he continued: "There is likewise a necessary demand for adequate guards in the city." The local troops were accordingly withdrawn from the front, for a time, and restored to their usual avocations.

As early as the 19th of June, news had arrived from both Hunter and Sheridan. Hunter, instead of moving east, as Grant expected, had turned to the west, and struck the East Tennessee road, beyond Lynchburg; while Sheridan, now unable to communicate with him, was returning to the army of the Potomac, and had already arrived at Walkerton, on the Mattapony. Immediately upon the receipt of this intelligence, Grant directed Meade to dispatch Wilson, with the remainder of the cavalry, against the southern railroads. "My view is that the road to Weldon should be crossed as near Petersburg as possible, and the first strike made for the Lynchburg and Petersburg road; thence, to the Danville road, upon which all the damage possible

should be done." Wilson's command had been incessantly and actively engaged, since the 12th of June; at first, guarding the movements of the entire army, and afterwards protecting the rear and the trains; but by the 22nd, he was ready again to start; and as soon as Sheridan returned, Meade was ordered to bring that commander to the left of the army of the Potomac, breaking up the post at White House, and abandoning all the region between the James, and the York and Pamunkey rivers.

But on the 20th, word was brought from Abercrombie, in command at White House, that he had been attacked by a large force of the enemy. A small garrison had been left at this point, to cover the return of Sheridan and Hunter, and to hold the railroad bridge for their crossing, and Grant had also directed Butler to send two army gunboats to the Pamunkey, to guard the river until the garrison could be removed. He notified Abercrombie of this support, and ordered him "to hold out at all hazards," for Sheridan was at hand.

It was now definitely ascertained that a large rebel force had been detached in pursuit of Hunter. As that commander was entirely separated from supplies of food, save what he took from the country, and his ammunition was doubtless nearly exhausted, his situation was certain to be one of extreme peril. Grant, however, wrote to Halleck: "Such a force as he has should never be surprised, or find difficulty in making their way to a place of safety, if attacked by a superior force. The only apprehension I have for Hunter is that he may get out of ammunition." Meade was directed to send him word, if possible, by Wilson, to save his force in the



way he deemed best ; either returning to his own department, in the Valley of Virginia, or joining the army of the Potomac, as might appear most practicable.

The rebels were certainly full of vigor and desperation. Finding themselves comparatively secure against immediate attack at Petersburg, they made every use of their spare commands, to oppose and thwart the various plans of the national general. Troops had been sent at once to intercept Sheridan, on the Central railroad, and then to White House, to prevent his crossing the Pamunkey ; Breckenridge and Early were first dispatched towards Gordonsville, and afterwards to Lynchburg, to confront or follow Hunter ; while the main national army was still held off, twenty miles from Richmond.

On the 21st, Butler threw a pontoon bridge across the James, and secured the position of Deep Bottom, ten miles from Richmond, on the northern side. The object of this movement was to disturb and divide the enemy, rendering Lee still further uncertain as to the intentions of Grant ; and also to secure a footing, in case any serious operations on the northern bank of the James should become desirable. At the same time, Wilson started on his raid. News came in also that White House was safe, for Sheridan had arrived.

He had started, on the 7th of June, from the Pamunkey river, and crossed the North Anna on the 9th, marching along the northern bank, his advanced guard skirmishing almost constantly with mounted men of the enemy. On the 9th, he learned that Breckenridge's division of infantry was moving along the railroad to Gordonsville, on a line almost

parallel with his own, and that the rebel cavalry, under Hampton, had also left its position south of the Chickahominy, and was marching on Gordonsville. On the 10th, he re-crossed the North Anna, at Carpenter's ford, encamping on the southern bank of the river, and along the roads leading to Trevillian station, on the Virginia Central railway. The boldness of the enemy's scouting parties now indicated the presence of a large rebel force. On the 11th, Sheridan marched towards Trevillian, meeting at once and driving the enemy's advanced parties in his front. Torbert had the leading division, and at a point about three and a half miles from the station, encountered the rebels in full force, behind a line of breastworks, constructed in dense timber. Custer, with his brigade, was ordered to take a road through the woods, which had been found on the left, and reach Trevillian, or at least the rear of the enemy, attacking the led horses.\* In following this road, Custer passed between the divisions of Hampton and Fitz-Hugh Lee, and so on to Trevillian, taking possession of that place. As soon as it was known that Custer had reached the rebel rear, Sheridan dismounted the two remaining brigades of Torbert's division, and forming line of battle, as-

\* The ordinary method of fighting adopted by the cavalry generals on both sides, at this stage of the war, was to dismount three men out of every four, and put them at the front, while the fourth held the horses of all four at the rear. The cavalry in reality was mounted infantry; their horses took them rapidly from place to place, but the fighting was generally done afoot. The wooded character of the country, the universal practice of entrenching, as well as the extended range of small arms, made any other use of cavalry, in most instances, impracticable. Sabres were rarely used, and still more rarely crossed.

sailed the enemy's works, carried them, and drove Hampton pell-mell, and at a run, back on Custer, who was attacked at the same time by Lee, and began fighting in all directions. So panic-stricken was Hampton's force, and so rapidly was it pushed, that many of his men were driven through Custer's lines, and hundreds captured. While Torbert and Custer were thus engaged, Gregg attacked Fitz-Hugh Lee on the left, and drove him in the direction of Louisa court-house, continuing the pursuit until after dark. Hampton made his way towards Gordonsville, and was joined, in the night, by Fitz-Hugh Lee, who had made a detour westward, for the purpose.

That night, Sheridan encamped at Trevillian station, with five hundred prisoners. By these he was informed that Hunter, instead of coming towards Charlottesville, as had been expected, had turned in the direction of Lexington, and was apparently moving on Lynchburg; that Early's corps was also on its way to Lynchburg; and that Breckenridge had arrived at Gordonsville. These movements completely changed the situation. Hunter himself had made it impossible to communicate with his command; while, with rebel infantry as well as cavalry in Sheridan's front,\* he could not hope to capture Gordonsville, or inflict very serious damage on the

\* General Early declares that there was no infantry nearer Trevillian station than Lee's army, on the 11th and 12th of June; but this is contrary to all the information of the national commanders; and I am allowed by Colonel Evelyn, an officer of distinction who served under Hampton at the time, to state that there certainly was infantry engaged in the battle at Trevillian station, and afterwards posted between Sheridan and Gordonsville.



railroads. He had five hundred of his own wounded, besides those of the enemy, and, with five hundred prisoners, his advance would have been greatly impeded ; in fact, wounded and prisoners must all have been abandoned, had he attempted to proceed. Accordingly, he decided to return to the army of the Potomac.

On the morning of the 12th, he began the destruction of the railroad, in the direction of Louisa court-house, tearing up and burning eight miles of rail ; and in the afternoon, sent Torbert towards Gordonsville, to cover the crossing at Mallory's ford, on the North Anna river, by which route he desired to return. The enemy, however, was found, in full force, behind well-constructed rifle-pits, disputing the way to the ford. Nevertheless, on the extreme right, Torbert twice carried the rebel works, but was twice driven from them again. Night closed the contest ; but Sheridan was now convinced that he could not cross at Mallory's ford, without risking a general battle, in which all his ammunition must have been consumed, leaving none for the return march. He therefore moved his whole command back in the night, by the road on which he had advanced, re-crossed the North Anna at Carpenter's ford, and in the morning, unsaddled his horses, and turned them out to graze : they were nearly famished, having had no food for two days.

The rebels made no attempt to follow ; but two thousand negroes joined him, and added greatly to his embarrassments ; for he had no supplies, yet he could not let them starve. The whole command lived upon the country as best they could. Sheridan took a circuitous route, to avoid the enemy, march-

ing by the Catharpen road and Shady Grove, across the battle-field of Spottsylvania; then by Bowling Green, and along the north bank of the Mattapony. He was uncertain as to the position of the army of the Potomac, and ignorant whether or not the base at White House was broken up; but on the 18th, he learned that supplies awaited him at that point; and on the 19th, sending the wounded, negroes, and prisoners, under a guard of two regiments, to West Point, he marched with the remainder of his force, to Dunkirk, on the Mattapony, where the river was narrow enough for his pontoons to reach across. At an early hour on the 20th, he resumed his march, to the sound of artillery, in the direction of White House; but had not proceeded far when he was notified by Abercrombie that the place had been attacked. He sent an advance party swiftly on, with directions to report by couriers the condition of affairs, but soon learned that there was no occasion to push his jaded animals; for whatever crisis there had been was past. He, therefore, moved leisurely up to the banks of the Pamunkey, and went into camp, opposite the White House, the enemy holding the bluffs surrounding the White House farm.

On the morning of the 21st, Gregg's division crossed the bridge, dismounted, and Torbert's, mounted, and the enemy was driven from the bluffs; and in the evening, Tunstall station was taken, after a sharp engagement. At White House, Sheridan found orders to break up the depôt, and move the trains to Petersburg, crossing the Chickahominy at Jones's bridge. Abercrombie had already been relieved by Getty, who was in command of a small in-

fantry force, composed chiefly of fragments of regiments and batteries.

On the 24th, Sheridan resumed his march from the White House, intending to cross the James, by Butler's pontoon bridge, at Deep Bottom. To reach this point, he must march as far as Charles City court-house, and then by Harrison's landing and Malvern Hill, the latter place being occupied by the enemy. All the trains from the former base of the army, at White House, were to move under his escort, and together with his own, they formed a line of wagons ten miles long. Torbert's division marched out on the Charles City court-house road; and, in the vicinity of the court-house, the advanced guard encountered the enemy, driving him across Herring creek, on the road to Westover church. As soon as this attack was reported to Sheridan, he gave orders to halt the train—the head of which was far beyond Charles City court-house—at convenient points on the road; and Torbert was directed to push his whole division to the front, to meet the enemy; while Gregg, who had marched on the road leading to St. Mary's church, for the purpose of protecting the right flank of the trains, and who had also been attacked, was instructed to hold fast, until all the wagons could pass the court-house. The train was immediately put in motion, and safely parked in the vicinity of Wilcox's landing, on the James.

At St. Mary's church, Gregg was attacked by the entire cavalry corps of the enemy, under Hampton, and after a stubborn fight, which lasted until dark, was compelled to retire in some confusion, but without any loss in material. He was outnumbered, probably, two to one, and several



hundred men, besides four colonels, were killed or wounded ; but the loss must have been heavy on the rebel side, for the enemy came within close canister range. This very creditable engagement saved the train, from which not a wagon or horse was missing. During the night, it was moved back through Charles City court-house, to Douthard's landing, opposite Fort Powhatan, and there ferried across the James ; after which the troops were transported in the same manner. When Gregg was attacked, Sheridan had applied for reinforcements, and in the night Grant sent him the garrison from City Point, with all the troops that could be spared from Bermuda Hundred, but before they arrived, the emergency was past.

On the same day, the 26th of June, a rebel force was reported crossing the James at Drury's Bluff, which Grant supposed to consist of the troops that had confronted Sheridan. This threatened Wilson's expedition against the western railroads. "It is highly probable," Grant said to Meade, "that the cavalry will take position to try to prevent operations by us on the Weldon road." On the 27th, he asked : "Have you any information through rebel sources of the whereabouts of Wilson, since he reached Burksville ? . . . If Wilson finds his return cut off, he will be apt to go out by Newbern, or, if it is found that Hampton's cavalry has gone south, Sheridan will have to be put upon his track." For several days the heat was excessive ; there was no rain, the country was clouded with dust, and the army rested from active operations. The men were greatly exhausted, and had evidently not yet recovered their spirit, or physical strength. Fifty guns, however, now bore on Petersburg, while the sharp-shooting

and skirmishing on Meade's front were constant. The whole national line was as strongly fortified as that of the rebels, the left being greatly refused, and running parallel with the Weldon road. On the 27th, Grant said to Halleck: "All is quiet here now, except from our own guns, which fire into the bridge at Petersburg, from a distance of about two thousand yards. . . . All the railroads leading into Richmond are now destroyed." On the 28th, he said: "The Weldon road we can keep destroyed." The prognostications of Lee were verified.

It was evident, however, that the rebels could hold the works in front of Petersburg with the thinnest of lines, and extend westward, behind entrenchments, as rapidly as the army of the Potomac; thus resisting any attempt to secure permanent possession of the Southside road. The task of enveloping Petersburg must be protracted as well as difficult. Grant therefore resolved to terminate all operations throughout the entire country, except those in Georgia and Virginia. On the 23rd of June, he said to Halleck: "The siege of Richmond bids fair to be tedious, and in consequence of the very extended lines we must have, a much larger force will be necessary than would be required in ordinary sieges, against the same force that now oppose us. With my present force, I feel perfectly safe against Lee's army, and acting defensively, would still feel so, against Lee and Johnston combined. But we want to act offensively. . . . To do this effectively, we should concentrate our whole energy against the two principal armies of the enemy. In other words, nothing should be attempted except in Georgia and here, or that is not directly co-operative with these

moves. West of the Mississippi, I would not attempt anything, until the rebellion east of it is entirely subdued. I would, then, direct Canby to leave" [Kirby] "Smith\* unmolested where he is, and to make no move, except what is necessary to protect what he now holds. All the troops he can spare should be sent here at once. The white troops of the Nineteenth corps can all come, together with many of the colored troops." These views were acted on at once, and orders based upon them were sent to General Canby.

On the 26th, reports arrived from Sherman, of an unsuccessful assault on Kenesaw mountain, in which his losses amounted to nearly three thousand men. His situation was still, in some respects, not unlike that of Grant in the Wilderness campaign. "The facility," said Sherman, "with which defensive works of timber and earth are constructed, gives the party on the defensive great advantage. . . . I can press Johnston all the time and keep him from reinforcing Lee, but to assault him in position would cost us more lives than we can spare." Grant, however, directed Halleck: "Telegraph General Sherman that he can move his army independent of the desire which he has expressed, of detaining all of Johnston's army where it is. I think Lee now would only be weakened by reinforcements. He has force enough to act defensively behind his entrenchments, and any addition would only consume supplies which he must find it difficult to transport." It is curious to note the concurrence in the views of the two men who com-

\* Kirby Smith was at this time in command of all the rebel troops west of the Mississippi.



manded the hostile armies. At this very time, Lee was sending Early and Breckenridge away from Petersburg, and announcing the embarrassments of his commissariat to the rebel cabinet.

But Sherman also had his apprehensions in regard to supplies. Only a single line of railroad connected Chattanooga with his army, and while in front of Kenesaw mountain, he said : " I cannot well turn the position of the enemy, without abandoning my railroad, and we are already so far out from supplies that it is as much as the road can do, to feed and supply the army. There are no supplies of any kind here." The rebel cavalry at the West, under Forrest, had evidently waited for Sherman to advance far enough into Georgia to make retreat disastrous, and then intended to attack the line in his rear, and destroy it beyond the possibility of further use. Sherman, however, had anticipated this danger, and left a sufficient cavalry force to operate against Forrest in West Tennessee, with Brigadier-General Sturgis in command. But on the morning of the 10th of June, Sturgis met the enemy at Guntown, Mississippi, was badly beaten, and driven back, in utter rout and confusion, to Memphis, a distance of a hundred miles, hotly pursued by the enemy. As this disaster exposed Sherman's entire line of communications, he at once ordered A. J. Smith, who was then at Memphis, with eight or ten thousand men, on his way from the Red river to join Canby, to move out instead against Forrest, and prevent him from reaching the railroads. Grant approved of this change in the orders to Smith, and directed Halleck to leave him at Sherman's disposal. On the 28th, he asked :

"Has A. J. Smith started yet after Forrest? I am afraid Sherman will have difficulty with his communications, if Forrest is not kept busy." In the same despatch, he inquired: "Is Foster doing anything in South Carolina? . . . It seems to me that Foster has a force to do the enemy great injury in the present hollow condition of the interior of the South." Grant indeed was very well aware that his operations had drawn all the rebel strength to the outside boundaries of the Confederacy, and that any national attack or advance to the interior must inflict enormous injury, while meeting no important opposition. "I see from the Petersburg papers," he said, "that Sam. Jones has called upon citizens far and near to rally to Augusta, Georgia, to protect that place from a formidable raid which now threatens it." Halleck at once gave Foster orders to organize an expedition westward, from the Carolina coast.

And so, while detaining Lee in Petersburg, and distressing the rebel capital and cabinet by the interruption of all their communications and supplies; while dispatching reinforcements to Sheridan, north of the James, and providing succor for Wilson, in case it should be required; bringing troops from Louisiana to Virginia, and sending orders to Meade and Wilson and Halleck, in regard to Hunter; Grant was also studying the wants of Sherman in the heart of Georgia, ordering a corps into West Tennessee, and directing a movement to the interior of South Carolina. As soon as Hunter could extricate himself, he was to move again by his former route, up the Valley of Virginia. "Put General Hunter in a good place, to rest, and as

soon as possible, start him for Charlottesville, to destroy the road there effectually. If he could get on the canal also, it would be a great help." One fatiguing and venturesome campaign was hardly over, when another was ordered for the same command, as full of danger and toil. Grant was indeed working out the plan he had laid down for himself in May. He evidently believed that these incessant attacks on the resources and armies of the South would end the war. The confidential correspondence of the rebel government and its generals shows that they were of the same mind.

Meanwhile, the expedition of Wilson against the southern railroads had not returned. On the 28th of June, Meade notified Grant that a force of rebel cavalry had been seen passing to the left and rear, by the Weldon road. "I have no doubt that their object is to interpose between Wilson and Sheridan, to attack either as opportunity offers, and in the meantime, to make a dash into our rear, if practicable. Orders were yesterday given Sheridan, after crossing the river, to move up the Jerusalem plank road, and take post on the left of the army." Sheridan's instructions were detailed, and concluded in these words: "Be prepared for active co-operation with General Wilson, to aid his return." On the 28th, Meade said: "I have heard nothing from General Wilson, or of him, since his departure, except the reports of contrabands,\* that

\* This history may find readers for whom it will be necessary to explain that in the early days of the rebellion, when many Northerners were still averse to the emancipation of the slaves, General Butler, with equal felicity of wit and legal acumen, declared them, as property of the enemy—contraband of war,



the roads out of Petersburg have been cut." Both Grant and Meade were on the alert in regard to this important expedition, and most anxious for the earliest information which should enable them to protect or support its movements, and secure a safe return. But as yet, Wilson had sent no messengers to announce his coming.

At last, intelligence arrived. At ten o'clock on the morning of the 29th, a staff officer reached Meade, and reported that, after doing great damage to the Lynchburg and Danville roads, Wilson had started, on the 26th, to return; but at Stony creek, on the Weldon road, he was intercepted by a large force of the enemy, infantry as well as cavalry; his command had been separated, and one division under Kautz, was now moving by Dinwiddie court-house towards Ream's station; while Wilson, who was in extreme danger, hoped to follow with the remainder before daylight.\* Wright was at once ordered to move with his whole corps to Ream's station; and Sheridan, now marching up from Fort Powhatan to the left of the army, was directed to proceed as rapidly as possible to the same point. Wright was to send one division without a moment's delay, and follow with all haste, with the remainder of his corps; he was also to throw out a cavalry regiment on the left, and communicate with Wilson, in advance of the infantry. These orders were given by Meade, without waiting to confer with Grant.

and therefore liable to seizure. The country accepted the idea and the term, and in common speech the negroes were thereafter often known as "contrabands."

\* Captain Whittaker, the officer who brought this message, cut his way through the enemy's line, losing half of his escort of forty men, in the exploit.

The general-in-chief, however, was not disturbed, when notified of the danger. "The showing is against us," he said, ". . . but with Wright at Ream's station, Wilson south of the enemy, and Sheridan marching in that direction, you have done all possible, and it will be queer if the count does not turn in our favor. I am very much in hopes that the enemy will be struck in the rear, most disagreeably to him, and that his road in the meantime will be destroyed effectually, as far as our troops occupy the line of it. . . . If the enemy should follow Wright and Sheridan with infantry, of course we will follow him with infantry. All that I can see beyond what you have already done, is to follow up the same principle you have started upon: follow up a force of the enemy with a larger one."

Wright arrived at Ream's, at six o'clock, on the 29th, without meeting the enemy, or hearing from Wilson, except through citizens, who reported disaster. Wright was now ordered to remain at Ream's, until the arrival of Sheridan, and in conjunction with the cavalry, endeavor to ascertain Wilson's position, and extricate him. At nine p.m., Kautz came in, with his own command and a portion of Wilson's division. He stated that the entire force had been surrounded and overpowered, and forced to abandon their wounded, as well as the trains and artillery. He had escaped with his own division through the woods, and believed Wilson to be making a detour, by way of Jarrott's station.

Sheridan did not arrive at Ream's until the 30th, when he was ordered to move with his whole force in the direction in which the enemy was

reported to have followed Wilson, and make every effort to secure his safe return. It was too late, however, to render material assistance. On the 1st of July, it was ascertained that Wilson had succeeded in crossing Blackwater creek ; he arrived at the James river before night, and Sheridan was withdrawn to Prince George court-house, while the Sixth corps resumed its old position on the left of the army.

Wilson had started from Prince George court-house, at two A.M. on the 22nd of June, Kautz's division of four regiments having been added to his command ; so that his force amounted to nearly six thousand men. Kautz was in the advance, and moved at once to Ream's, where he destroyed the station and broke up the road. Thence he marched by Dinwiddie court-house, to the Southside road, striking it at a point about fourteen miles west of Petersburg. As the rear of the column was passing Ream's station, it was attacked by a considerable force of cavalry, afterwards ascertained to be the division of W. F. Lee ; but the fighting was unimportant. Kautz reached Ford's station, on the Southside road, by four P.M., capturing two engines and sixteen cars, burning the station-building, water-tanks, and cross-ties, and destroying the railroad, for several miles ; while Wilson's own division, under Colonel McIntosh, tore up and burned the rails from Sixteen-mile Turn-out to Ford's. At two A.M., on the 23rd, Kautz proceeded to Burksville junction, one of the most important strategical positions in the entire South, where the Danville and Southside roads intersect each other. He arrived in the afternoon, meeting



with slight resistance; and the men were at once set to work, burning stations, tanks, and trestle-work, and tearing up the roads in all directions. By laying fence rail lengthwise on the road, and then setting fire to it, the metal was warped and expanded, and the ties were so injured as to compel the entire reconstruction of a portion of both roads.

Wilson followed Kautz, completing the work of destruction, but near Nottoway court-house, he was overtaken by W. F. Lee, who succeeded in interposing his command between the two national divisions. A sharp engagement ensued, but Wilson finally repelled the force that sought to detain him, and pushed on towards the Danville road. His object was not to fight the enemy, but to do all the damage possible to the railways, and then return to Meade.\* He succeeded in rejoining Kautz at Meherrin station, on the Danville road, having lost seventy-five men, in killed, wounded, and missing.

On the 25th, the whole command proceeded along the railroad towards the Staunton river, destroying the road as it advanced. At six p.m., Kautz's division, still in the van, arrived at Roanoke station, where the Danville railroad crosses the Staunton river, and at once attacked the bridge, hoping to burn the northern end; but the rebels had six guns in position on the southern bank, and four lines of rifle trench, defended by the militia from eight counties, and a small force from Danville.

\* Wilson's orders were to continue the destruction of the railways "until driven from it by such attacks of the enemy as you can no longer resist."

Kautz was, therefore, unable to reach a point nearer than seventy or eighty yards from the bridge. Simultaneously with this attack, W. F. Lee assaulted Wilson's rear, but was held in check without serious difficulty.

It was evident, however, that the bridge could not be carried without severe loss, if at all. The enemy was close in rear; the Staunton river was too deep to ford, and Wilson had no pontoons; he therefore decided to return. His position was delicate; but he moved in the night, by a road running south-easterly, along the bank of the river, and within five hundred yards of the enemy's cannon. McIntosh now had the advance, followed by the trains, while Kautz covered the rear. They marched almost due east, all day on the 26th and 27th, crossing the Meherrin and Nottoway rivers, the latter at Double Bridges, where they arrived at noon, on the 28th. Here Wilson learned that the rebels had a small force of infantry at Stony creek station, on the Weldon road, with two small detachments of cavalry.

His route would take him within two miles of Stony creek station, and the advance was at once pushed forward in that direction. The rebel picket was driven in, and the ground cleared for the main column; but a heavy fight ensued, and Wilson learned from the first prisoners that Hampton's cavalry had just arrived from the northern bank of the James, to reinforce W. F. Lee. He at once ordered McIntosh to hold the ground until Kautz and the trains could proceed by a more western route to Ream's station; and at ten P.M., after Kautz was out of the way, McIntosh was directed to follow. But the country was difficult, and it

was broad daylight before the troops confronting the rebel position could be withdrawn. By that time the enemy was ready to attack in force. Wilson, however, succeeded in withdrawing his front line without confusion; but the second was struck in flank, and driven to the rear, many taking to the woods. Nevertheless, he finally extricated the greater portion of his command, and moved to Ream's.

By seven A.M. of the 29th, Kautz had arrived at Ream's, where he found the rebel infantry in his front, and was thrown into some confusion. He rallied his men, however, and held the enemy back, until Wilson came up with the remainder of the force, and prepared to break through the rebel line. Up to this moment, Wilson had supposed Meade's left to extend to the Weldon road, and that he had only to penetrate the force in his immediate front, to communicate with the national army. He now learned that, instead of this, the rebels held the railroad, and interposed a strong force to prevent his junction with Meade. He still, however, proposed to break through the rebel ranks, when a heavy force of infantry appeared in line of battle, advancing across the fields through which he had intended to pass; at the same moment, a body of rebel troops was reported on his left.

Almost surrounded as he was, and taken completely by surprise, he ordered, first, the issue of all the ammunition the troops could carry, and the destruction of the wagons and caissons; and as soon as these dispositions could be made, the movement of the whole force by the Double Bridges, back to the south side of the Nottoway river. Shortly



after mid-day, the retreat began; but the enemy advanced at the same moment, and swept away the covering force, breaking in between the two divisions of Wilson and Kautz, taking the former in reverse, and throwing the whole rear into confusion. After a brief struggle, the artillery was abandoned, and the troops took to the woods. Kautz was unable to effect a reunion with the remainder of the command, and found his way back, by a devious route, to the lines of the national army.

The enemy pressed heavily in pursuit of Wilson, but, after a while, the exertions of the officers succeeded in establishing a strong rear-guard. At Stony creek, the rebels made a strong push, but the command had been re-formed, and crossed in safety, though the bridge was bad, and the stream unfordable, and the enemy opened with artillery, during the crossing. A thousand negroes had joined the command, from all parts of the route, and now added enormously to its embarrassments. Many were sabred, or shot, or trampled down, although unarmed, by the rebel cavalry.

Wilson pushed his broken division with the utmost rapidity, to the Nottoway river, arriving at Double Bridges, between ten and eleven P.M.; here he took the road to Jarrott's station, on the Weldon railway; the head of the column arriving at a point within two miles of that place, at two A.M. At dawn, on the 30th, the command passed the station, meeting no serious resistance. It then moved east, crossing the Nottoway again at Peter's ford, and marching for Blunt's bridge, on the Blackwater river. Here, however, Wilson learned that a rebel force

had left Stony creek that morning, to intercept him on the Jerusalem road. Hurrying on, he arrived at the Blackwater, to find the bridge gone, and the stream utterly unfordable. He at once began the repair of the bridge, which was soon made fit for crossing; but the materials having been partly burned, gave way: it was again repaired, but again gave way, while the men were crossing, and new girders had to be cut from the woods, before the command could pass. By six A.M., however, the troops were all across, and the bridge was destroyed: and shortly afterwards, a force of the enemy appeared on the opposite side of the river. But the command was now safe, and after resting a few hours, Wilson moved to Cabin Point, on the James, where he went into camp. At three P.M., on the 2nd of July, he arrived at Light House Point, having been absent ten days and a half, marched more than three hundred miles, destroyed sixty miles of railroad, and been engaged in four battles. At no place did the troops rest more than six hours, and during the last four days at no time had they halted longer than four hours. Wilson had lost one thousand men and sixteen guns, and suffered as complete a rout as any national commander during the war. He had been opposed, however, by superior numbers, and by infantry as well as cavalry; and Grant declared that the damage inflicted on the enemy far more than compensated for any that had been received.

The disaster was occasioned by Wilson's expectation of finding infantry in possession of the Weldon road; but Hampton's speedy movements undoubtedly contributed to the completeness of the

roul. After fighting Sheridan, on the 26th, north of the James, the rebel commander moved rapidly across the river, at Drury's Bluff, and, on the morning of the 28th, was in front of Wilson, at Stony creek. Meade made every effort to relieve the cavalry, as soon as its approach was known; and if Wilson had not relied on the presence of the national left at Ream's station, which was contemplated at the time of his departure, but of course not certain, and, in the absence of definite intelligence, had moved by the more circuitous route which he finally adopted, he would undoubtedly have escaped the disastrous termination of an expedition, which up to the last two days, had been one of the most successful of the war.

These raiding movements were always looked upon as ventures by Grant. They were attempts, at great risk, to accomplish certain objects; the destruction of certain stores, or resources, or communications; if that destruction was consummated, even at the sacrifice of the force which accomplished it, the raid was a success. It is often worth while in war to pay the price of the utter loss of a small command for the sake of securing some definite object. In the capture of a town by assault, the forlorn hope which leads the attack is almost certain to be destroyed; still, it is wiser and more humane to incur this risk in a single assault than to waste away a larger force in a protracted siege. It was somewhat so with the raids, but with this difference, that in case of disaster, the greater part of the command, even if lost, was only captured, not killed.

Each of the expeditions of this character which



Grant had planned, had accomplished very much of its purpose. Wilson had done all that he was expected or ordered to do against the country and communications of the enemy; and if Sheridan had been unable to carry out his instructions to the letter, it was from no fault of his own. He had, however, withdrawn the rebel cavalry from the south side of the Chickahominy, and thus materially assisted the army of the Potomac in the passage of the James; moreover, he returned without receiving any serious injury, while Wilson, less fortunate, only arrived shattered and disorganized, within the national lines. But had all the other subordinates of Grant accomplished in proportion as much as these, the raids would be seen to have formed not only an important, but a most successful feature in his plans. The extreme anxiety they caused the rebel government and generals has been shown. They did their full share towards producing the result at which the national commander aimed. That he so thought is evident by the subsequent use he made of both Sheridan and Wilson, in operations on a far wider scale, but of not dissimilar character.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Geography of Valley of Virginia—Movements of Sigel and Crook in May—Hunter relieves Sigel—Junction of Hunter with Crook—Battle at Piedmont—Victory of Hunter—Advance upon Lexington—Concentration of rebels at Lynchburg—Engagements of 17th and 18th of June—Arrival of Early—Withdrawal of Hunter—Retreat to the mountains—Pursuit by Early—Escape of Hunter—Early returns to Lynchburg—Hunter arrives in the Kanawha—Results of campaign—Complaints of inhabitants—Strategical mistakes of Hunter—Early advances down the Valley—Arrives at Winchester—Sigel evacuates Martinsburg—Early follows to Harper's Ferry—Hunter delayed on the Ohio river—Early advances to Monocacy—Alarm at Washington—Composure of Grant—Sixth corps ordered to Washington—President suggests removal of Grant's entire army to Washington—Grant resists the suggestion—Further reinforcements ordered North—Early defeats Wallace at Monocacy—Advances upon Washington—Retreats without a battle—Arrival of Sixth corps—Criticism of Early's movement—Confusion at the North—Pursuit of Early—Grant places Wright in command in Potomac Valley—Strategy of Grant—His anxiety for a single commander at the North—His views not carried out—General confusion and mismanagement in consequence.

THE Valley of Virginia embraces all the country between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany mountains, which unite at its south-western extremity. That part of the district known as the Shenandoah Valley is bounded by the Blue Ridge on the east, and the Great North mountain and its ranges, on the west: it forms the basin of the Shenandoah river and its important branches, reaching from the James river on the south, to the Potomac on the

orders to the contrary, he should move up the Shenandoah Valley, and try to connect with Crook. The two great armies of Grant and Lee had now moved away from the Valley, and this operation was entirely feasible. Accordingly, Sigel advanced with nearly six thousand men, as far as Newmarket, on the Staunton turnpike road. At this place, however, he was met by Breckenridge, with an inferior force,\* and badly beaten, losing six hundred and fifty men, and six guns, and retreating to a position on Cedar creek, about fifteen miles south of Winchester. The battle was fought on the 15th of May, and on the 21st, Sigel was superseded by Hunter. Breckenridge at once joined Lee.

Grant was at this time on the North Anna river, and sent instructions, through Halleck, that an advance upon Charlottesville and Gordonsville was most desirable, and if Lynchburg could be reached, the rebels would receive still greater damage. "The enemy are evidently relying for supplies on such as are brought over the branch road running through Staunton. On the whole, therefore, I think it would be better for General Hunter to move in that direction." On the 25th of May, he said: "The railroads and canal should be destroyed beyond possibility of repairs for weeks. Completing this, he could find his way back to his original base, or from about Gordonsville, join this army."

Hunter at once sent orders to Crook and Averill,

\* After the battle Breckenridge reported to Lee that his effective force was 2,400, exclusive of Imboden's cavalry, which numbered about 1,000. He had probably 4,000 men engaged.

Sigel stated that in consequence of the long trains he had to guard, he could not bring more than six regiments into the fight, besides the artillery and cavalry.



on the contrary, were devoted to the cause of the rebellion.

The Valley of Virginia afforded an avenue by which an enterprising enemy might, if unresisted, move down upon Maryland and Pennsylvania, and even upon the national capital. It was indispensable to guard against such efforts, and also to protect the long line of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. But with his usual policy, Grant preferred to make the defence an aggressive one. After providing for the railroad, therefore, the remainder of Sigel's command had been concentrated, in May, into two forces; one, of about ten thousand men, under Crook, to move by the Kanawha Valley, west of the Alleghanies, against the Lynchburg and Tennessee railroad, and do all the injury possible to the enemy's supplies and communications in that quarter; while the other, under Sigel himself, was to proceed up the Shenandoah Valley, and distract Lee.

Crook advanced, on the 2nd of May, with a body of cavalry under Averill, and struck the Tennessee railroad, near Dublin, tearing up the road for several miles, burning an important bridge over New river, and adding greatly to the alarm and distraction of the rebels. The despatches of both Lee and his government, as well as of the subordinate officers, attest the embarrassment caused by this movement, which, although it inflicted no irreparable injury, accomplished exactly what Grant had hoped and intended.\* Sigel was less fortunate. On the 8th of May, he telegraphed that unless he received

\* "To cut New river bridge and the road ten or twenty miles east from there would be the most important work Crook could do."—*Grant to Sigel, May 2.*

orders to the contrary, he should move up the Shenandoah Valley, and try to connect with Crook. The two great armies of Grant and Lee had now moved away from the Valley, and this operation was entirely feasible. Accordingly, Sigel advanced with nearly six thousand men, as far as Newmarket, on the Staunton turnpike road. At this place, however, he was met by Breckenridge, with an inferior force,\* and badly beaten, losing six hundred and fifty men, and six guns, and retreating to a position on Cedar creek, about fifteen miles south of Winchester. The battle was fought on the 15th of May, and on the 21st, Sigel was superseded by Hunter. Breckenridge at once joined Lee.

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who had moved to Meadow Bluffs, near the head of the Valley, to form a junction with him at Staunton, and, on the 26th, he separated from his base altogether, and advanced upon that point. His command consisted of about eight thousand five hundred men of all arms, with twenty-one guns. On the 5th of June, he met the enemy under General Vaughan, at Piedmont, on the Staunton road, and after a fight of ten hours' duration, utterly routed the only rebel force left in the Valley, capturing a thousand prisoners and three pieces of artillery on the field.\* All the country west of the Blue Ridge was now at his mercy. The next day he marched on Staunton, and on the 8th, was joined by Crook and Averill, who had inflicted important injury, not only on the Tennessee, but more recently on the Virginia Central railroad. He destroyed the military stores at Staunton and several miles of the road.

Hunter had now to determine whether to proceed to Lynchburg, or, as his orders contemplated, move eastward by Charlottesville and Gordonsville, and so, either join the army of the Potomac, or fall "back to his original base." He had, indeed, a certain discretion in regard to advancing on Lynchburg, but was expected, under all circumstances, to cover the roads leading down the Valley. Encouraged, however, by his success, and by reports of the panic in the country before him, he turned completely away, towards the south-west, marching, on

\* "Went in the fight yesterday with an aggregate of 5,600. I have not over 3,000 effective, including Imboden's cavalry, 800."—*Vaughan to Bragg, June 6.*



the 10th of June, by four roads, nearly parallel, on Lexington. This place was occupied on the 11th, without opposition, and a large amount of ordnance, ammunition, and provisions was destroyed. The Virginia Military Institute, the officers and cadets of which were serving in the rebel army, was burned. Moving on in the same direction, through the mountains, Hunter arrived, on the 14th, at Buchanan, forty miles west of Lynchburg.

By this time, however, the alarm had been sounded, and Breckenridge was returning to the Valley, with his command. The consternation produced by Hunter's advance was wide-spread. Nichols was at Lynchburg, with thirteen hundred men, and Imboden arrived there on the 14th, with two thousand. Vaughan had the remnants of the force which had fought at Piedmont, perhaps three thousand five hundred soldiers, and Breckenridge took back to the Valley about three thousand more. There was, besides, in the mountains, a command under McCausland, of nearly three thousand men, which had been contending against Crook; and others were to come from still further west. Altogether, if these could reach Lynchburg before Hunter, they would only amount to about twelve thousand men, while the united national force was eighteen thousand strong. Lee, therefore, on the urgent appeals of the commanders near Lynchburg, and in view of the pressing necessity there, ordered Early, at the head of twelve thousand men, Ewell's entire corps, to move by way of Louisa court-house and Charlottesville, through the Blue Ridge, and strike the rear of Hunter's army. Early started from Cold Harbor on the morning of the

13th of June, but did not reach Charlottesville till the 16th, when he learned that Hunter was moving on Lynchburg, and now only twenty miles from the town. The railroad from Charlottesville to Lynchburg, however, had been repaired, and on the 17th, Early started by train for Lynchburg, reaching the place with a division of infantry by one o'clock in the afternoon, none too soon.

Hunter had advanced through the mountains, from Lexington, by Buchanan, the Peaks of Otter, and Liberty ; at Buchanan, saving a bridge which the enemy had needlessly attempted to burn. The road had been blocked by felled trees, but was speedily cleared, and the advance was only feebly contested by light parties of cavalry. On the night of the 15th of June, he arrived at Liberty, twenty-four miles from Lynchburg ; and at four o'clock on the afternoon of the 17th, his cavalry came upon the enemy, strongly entrenched, at a point five miles west of the town. After a sharp fight the rebels were driven in, but it was late, and Hunter did not pursue, encamping on the battle-field. All night the rebel reinforcements were arriving. The noise of the trains, the beating of drums, and the cheering of the troops could be heard at Hunter's headquarters ; and, in the morning, when he pushed out his reconnoissances, strong redoubts were found on each of the main roads entering the town, flanked by rifle-pits, and protected by abatis ; while the rebel soldiers could be seen, working diligently to extend and strengthen the fortifications.

While Hunter was forming his troops, he was suddenly and obstinately attacked by a large force of the enemy, but after a severe action, the rebels

were driven behind their works. This engagement, however, made it evident that Early had arrived, and Hunter at once determined to retire. His army was two hundred and fifty miles from its base, with no communications; his ammunition was nearly exhausted; his numbers were now little more than sixteen thousand effective men; and he was in front of a force of twenty-five thousand. During the night of the 18th of June, therefore, his command, with its train and material, was quietly withdrawn.

Early discovered the movement by midnight, but delayed to pursue until morning, so that Hunter accomplished his withdrawal without annoyance. He marched by the shortest road, to Liberty, crossing the mountains at Buford's Gap, and on the 20th, arrived at Salem, on the Virginia and East Tennessee railroad—a waterless and sterile route—the country utterly impassable, except by the roads, on account of the density of the underbrush; the roads themselves rugged and precipitous, great gulfs yawning on either side, while mountains, covered with forests, towered in front, as if to bar the way. Even the valleys are rocky and barren, and the depressing influence of retreat made the scenery absolutely repelling. At Liberty, Early came up with the rear-guard, but no serious fighting occurred. The national forces had completely passed before any impression could be made. At Buford's Gap, he sent round a force, through the mountains, to intercept the retreat, but found the national troops in possession of the crest, with batteries commanding the gorge, where it was impossible for a regiment to move in line. He attempted to throw a force up the sides of the mountain, but



these were so rugged that night came on before anything could be accomplished, and he was obliged to withdraw, though not until a late hour. Thus, the national retrograde was effected without serious loss, and Salem was reached in safety.

Thence, Hunter turned off through a narrow pass, called Hanging Rock, and Early's column was immediately moved upon the same place, only to find, on reaching it, that Hunter's rear-guard had passed through the gorge. At this point, the national wagons and artillery became entangled, and two hundred of Early's picked men, coming up, began hacking the wheels of the artillery. A brigade of Averill's, however, soon arrived, and a section of one of the batteries opened fire with canister and spherical case shot, killing about thirty of the enemy. Ten guns had been injured, but four were remounted on the spare wheels of the battery, and six were destroyed and left on the road. This was afterwards paraded as an important capture of artillery by the rebels. It was the only injury of consequence inflicted on Hunter during the retreat. Not a wagon or an ambulance was captured, though Hunter himself was obliged to burn many, as the horses that drew them died for want of forage. The useless saddles were also burned in heaps, at convenient places on the road, or carried in the empty commissariat wagons. A few sick or footsore men fell to the rear, but no absolute captures were made. Most of the troops, though pinched now with hunger, depressed by retreat, and weary with the difficult mountain-climbing, maintained a resolute spirit and demeanor, conscious that the destruction they had wrought in

the Valley, of material and supplies, and the damage to the railways compensated for all their present sufferings. There was literally no food in these sterile mountains ; the few cattle, driven at the head of each division, began to fail ; and a handful of corn, with a rasher of bacon, or an onion, was a feast that even the officers seldom enjoyed. The diminished column trailed its weary length, like a wounded serpent, through the ever-rising, ever-falling wilderness of mountains, but was always ready to turn against a too-presuming enemy.

Early also had his sufferings. His men had nothing to eat for two days, except a little bacon, after leaving Liberty ; the cooking utensils were with the trains, and the effort to have bread baked at Lynchburg had failed. Neither his artillery nor his wagons were up, and if there had been food or forage in the country, Hunter was in advance, and sure to consume it. The field officers were afoot, as their horses could not be transported when the troops came by train from Charlottesville ; and Hunter marched fast, for the flying foe always moves quicker than the pursuers. Early found that his cavalry accomplished nothing of importance, and only disaster could come to his command from following further, so complete was the lack of provisions and forage. Thus, when Hunter had fairly entered the mountains, the rebels entirely disappeared : the troops had then only the natural difficulties of the road to contend with, and that gaunt enemy, Famine. But mountain still towered above mountain, and from the top of each, as they gained it, the weary soldiers looked down, with sad and sickened eyes, into the deep

gulf of valleys, beyond which still appeared mountain walls, apparently steeper, loftier, more barren and waterless than any they had passed. The limited diet began to produce illness, and diarrhœas and epidemics added to the sufferings of the command.

At last, on the 24th of June, the Sweet Springs were reached, and on the next day, the army descended into the exquisite valley of the White Sulphur Springs, where the horses were able to enjoy one day's good grazing. At Meadow Bluffs, in this vicinity, the men had hoped to find supplies, but met with a sickening disappointment, for the stores had been removed to Loup's creek, in the Kanawha Valley, and part had been burned, in a fright, by the militia left to guard them. A few sheep and hogs were found here, however; and, on the 26th, on the road to Gauley bridge, in the wildest region of the Alleghanies, the first of the supply trains was met, coming up from the Ohio river; while at the famous Hawk's Nest, where the New river empties into the Kanawha, amid the most enchanting scenery in America, not only a million rations, but shoes and uniforms were waiting for the ragged and barefooted command.

During the campaign, Hunter had beaten the enemy in every action in which he had been engaged. He had, by a movement of extraordinary audacity, menaced the very vitals of the rebellion, and disarranged the designs of its leaders;\* he had de-

\* "An audacious movement of the enemy up to the very walls of Lynchburg rendered it necessary that the government should send a formidable body of troops to cover that vital point, which had otherwise been intended for the relief of Atlanta."—*Speech of Jefferson Davis to the People of Georgia.*



stroyed effectually over fifty miles of the Virginia Central railroad, and inflicted nearly an equal amount of damage on the Virginia and Tennessee road; he had passed beyond the barrier lines of Mount Crawford, never before crossed by any national force; and had summoned Lee to defend, instantly, and at any cost, the Valley which contained or constituted, in a great measure, the granary and armory of the main rebel army in front of Grant. The cloth mills to clothe Lee's men, the flour mills to feed them, the gun-stock factories, shoe shops, saddle and harness factories, the countless furnaces and foundries from which came the main munitions for his army—ill able to afford the loss—had all been destroyed along the whole line, from Port Republic to Lynchburg. Three thousand muskets and twenty pieces of cannon, with large quantities of shells and gun-powder, were the military trophies of the campaign; canal boats and railway trains, loaded with ordnance stores, had fallen into the national hands; while immense supplies of provisions, cattle, and horses were captured and used by the army.

These great results had been accomplished with but little loss of men or material. About fifteen hundred men were killed, wounded, or missing, and six guns had been lost, disabled, as has been seen, by a stealthy attack, while inadvertently left unguarded on the march.\*

A great outcry was made at the time, on account

\* I am largely indebted, in my account of this campaign, to a little work by Colonel Halpine, of Hunter's staff, called "Baked Meats of the Funeral;" the figures are taken from the official reports.

of the destruction of property, in Hunter's campaign ; especially because private individuals were stripped of provisions, horses, cattle, or implements of industry. But those who have seen war know that the inhabitants of an invaded country always undergo the same fate, and utter the same complaints. Hunter was no harsher than a hundred other commanders in this and a hundred other wars. Moreover, the population of the South had deliberately made this a people's war ; and especially in the Valley of Virginia, did the partisan style of fighting prevail. No doubt, every people has the right to resort to this method of defence, but they must expect the enemy to retaliate. Hunter burned a few private houses, and there is no campaign in history in which such an event did not occur : Early also burned houses and towns, when he invaded Maryland and Pennsylvania. In Hunter's case, however, the houses were those of individuals who had made themselves obnoxious to reprisals, by refusing to accept the condition of non-combatants. The rebels in the Valley expected to carry on a guerilla war at intervals ; to molest the national forces as individuals, and in disguise ; to act as spies, scouts, guides for the enemy's forces, and occasionally poison a well, or shoot down a stray national soldier ; and to do all this with complete impunity ; to suffer in return no harm from the army that occupied their towns and villages. In this they were disappointed ; and their rage knew no bounds.\*

\* "Troops should be required to travel as light as possible, and to live off the country where it is possible. In the latter case, however, indiscriminate marauding should be avoided. Nothing should be taken not absolutely necessary for the troops, except

If, after the battle of Piedmont, instead of advancing upon Lynchburg, Hunter had moved direct to Charlottesville, as Grant both hoped and intended,\* the junction with Sheridan would have been formed, the Shenandoah Valley protected,

when captured from an armed enemy. Impressments should all be made under orders from the commanding officer, and by a disbursing officer. Receipts should be given for all property taken, so that the loyal may collect pay, and the property be accounted for."—*Grant to Sigel, March 29.*

These instructions were turned over to Hunter when he assumed command.

\* "According to the instructions I sent to General Halleck for your guidance, you were to proceed to Lynchburg and commence there. It would be of great value for us to get possession of Lynchburg for a single day. But that point is of so much importance to the enemy that in attempting to get it, such resistance may be met as to defeat your getting on to the road or canal at all. I see, in looking over the letter to General Halleck on the subject of your instructions, that it rather indicates that your route should be from Staunton, viâ Charlottesville. If you have so understood it, *you will be doing just what I want.* The direction I would now give is that, if this letter reaches you in the Valley, between Staunton and Lynchburg, you immediately turn east, by the more practicable road, until you strike the Lynchburg branch of the Virginia Central road. From there, move eastward, along the line of the road, destroying it completely and thoroughly, until you join General Sheridan. After the work laid out for General Sheridan and yourself is thoroughly done, proceed to join the army of the Potomac by the route laid out in General Sheridan's instructions. *If any portion of your force, especially your cavalry, is needed back in your Department, you are authorized to send it back.* If, on receipt of this, you should be near to Lynchburg, and deem it practicable to reach that point, you will exercise your judgment about going there."—*Grant to Hunter, June 5.*

These orders, being sent by Sheridan, never reached Hunter; they were, however, only an elaboration of those he had already received. See pages 335 and 417.



and his own subsequent disasters averted. The positive instructions sent him, through Sheridan, to that effect, never, however, reached him ; and he, doubtless, acted within what he supposed to be the spirit of those he had received. But the choice he made was none the less unfortunate, as later events were still more plainly to show.

Upon arriving at the White Sulphur Springs, there were again two routes open to him, but in this case, by which to return ; one, parallel with the Valley of the Shenandoah, by which he might have moved rapidly down and united with Sigel, thus covering this important region against an advance of the enemy ; the other, by the Kanawha Valley, to the Ohio river ; or rather to Charleston, and thence, by steamboat on the Kanawha and up the Ohio, to Parkersburg, the terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad ; from which point his troops could be transported east by train. The former route was two hundred miles long, and through a country sparsely populated and much wasted by war, so that supplies would be scarce ; the enemy would doubtless be in advance and block the way, perhaps driving the national forces still further into the Alleghanies ; while the deficiency of ammunition made it impossible to risk any serious encounter. The Kanawha route was open and safe ; supplies in abundance were within three days' march ; and it was thought that, by steamboats and railways, the time required to form the junction with Sigel would be lessened, while the troops would arrive rested, and fed, and ready for further operations in the field. These considerations determined Hunter to select the Kanawha route, and he

moved towards Charleston, leaving absolutely no national force in the Valley of the Shenandoah, south of Sigel's little command at Martinsburg; a mistake still greater than that he committed in choosing his route for the advance.

On the 1st of July, Halleck telegraphed to Grant that he had heard nothing from Hunter since the 28th of June, the line west of Harper's Ferry having been broken by guerillas. There were conflicting rumors of a rebel force in the Shenandoah Valley. "It would certainly," he said, "be good policy for them, while Hunter's army is on the Kanawha, to destroy the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and make a raid into Maryland and Pennsylvania. . . . Sigel has very little besides militia at Harper's Ferry and on the railroad, and by sending away the artillery we should have nothing . . . with which to reinforce him."

On the 2nd, Sigel, who was at Martinsburg, on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, announced that there were strong indications of a movement of the enemy in force down the Valley. "I have ordered," he said, "all the stores which can be transported to be removed from here to Harper's Ferry." Early was indeed approaching the Potomac, with his entire force—Breckenridge, Imboden, Vaughan, McCausland, and his own corps. His original orders were to move down the Valley, cross the Potomac near Leesburg, in Loudon county, at or above Harper's Ferry, as he might find most practicable, and threaten Washington city. These instructions had been given him before he started for Lynchburg, and when he returned from the unsatisfactory pursuit of Hunter, he found them condition-

ally renewed. He was at liberty either to return to Lee, or attempt the expedition across the Potomac; and he chose the latter course. On the 27th of June, his force was at Staunton, where he halted for a day to reorganize the command. This now consisted of nearly twenty-five thousand men, including between four and five thousand cavalry.\*

At this time, Lee again submitted it to Early's judgment whether, under the altered circumstances, the movement down the Valley and across the Poto-

\* General Early states that his official reports showed 10,000 muskets and 2,000 mounted men for duty, at Staunton; in all 12,000 troops; and he leaves it to be supposed that this was the force with which he moved down the Valley. But the official reports of which he speaks were not accessible to him when he wrote, so that his assertion rests upon what I have found to be an exceedingly treacherous memory. Any uncorroborated statement of General Early, in regard to numbers, is worthless for historical purposes. But, at Grant's head-quarters, where the accumulation of information of this character was reduced to a science, the strength of Early's own corps, when he set out for Lynchburg, was estimated at 12,000. This was less than the number in either of the other corps of Lee's army; and Early had not been more often engaged nor endured more hardships than either Hill or Anderson; there was no reason why his corps should have fallen off more largely. He, however, received heavy reinforcements before starting for the Potomac. The following despatches from commanders who accompanied him, show their estimate of their own numbers at dates, with one exception, not distant from the 26th of June. If there were losses in battle, or from sickness, after the despatches were written, they were certainly compensated by additions, from various sources, to the command.

"Went in the fight yesterday with an aggregate of 5,600. I have not over 3,000 effective, including Imboden's cavalry, 800."  
—*Vaughan to Bragg, June 6.*

"General Jones's cavalry brigade, 1,100 strong, has just arrived."  
—*Vaughan to Bragg, June 7.*

"I am here with 2,000 cavalry. . . . General Nichols has,



mac should be made: Early, however, was determined to carry out his original purpose at all hazards, and on the 28th, the march was resumed, with five days' rations in the wagons and two days' in haversacks; empty wagons being left to bring up shoes, for half the command was barefooted. He took with him between forty and fifty cannon.

all told, not over 1,300 effective men."—*Imboden to Bragg, June 14.*

Speaking of a fight with Crook on the 9th of May, McCausland reported: "We never had 3,000 men in all;" on the 12th, he said: "I am collecting the reserves in this county [Roanoke], and will unite them with my own force."

There were also with Early, according to his own statement, Breckenridge's division of infantry, a brigade of cavalry under Jackson, and a battalion of Maryland cavalry. The calculation is not difficult.

Early's own corps ... ..	12,000	
Vaughan, in addition to Imboden,	3,500	when recruited.
Jones's brigade ....	1,100	
Imboden ... ..	2,000	
Nichols ... ..	1,300	
McCausland ... ..	3,500	including reserves.
Breckenridge ... ..	3,000	
Jackson and the Maryland battalion	1,500	a low estimate.
<hr/>		
27,900		

Thus, Early could easily have left a sufficient force in West Virginia and East Tennessee, and still have taken with him between 20,000 and 25,000 troops, when he moved down the Valley.

Finally, the official return of Sheridan's Provost Marshal-General shows 13,000 prisoners captured from Early between the 1st of August, 1864, and the 1st of March, 1865—(within 1,000 of what Early claims was his entire force at the beginning of the campaign).

See Appendix for estimate of Early's force by Colonel Cutts, of Halleck's staff; also for remarks of Major-General J. G. Barnard—"Report on Defences of Washington."

On the 2nd of July, he had reached Winchester, Sigel being still at Martinsburg, about twenty miles away. The distance from the latter point to Washington is only sixty miles. At Harper's Ferry, fifteen miles east, the Potomac river intervenes, but if Early once emerged from the mountains, there was no natural obstacle to his advance, except the Monocacy river; and no fortified place whatever in his path, outside the defences of the capital.

On the 3rd, the rebel general divided his command; Breckenridge was to march direct upon Martinsburg, while the principal part of the force moved eastward to Leetown, to cut off Sigel's retreat. On the approach of Breckenridge, however, Sigel evacuated Martinsburg, and, encountering the rebel advance at Leetown, drove it back, crossing the Potomac at Shepherdstown, and proceeded to Maryland Heights, the hills commanding Harper's Ferry. The rebels followed on the 4th, on which day the national forces evacuated Harper's Ferry, burning the railroad and pontoon bridges across the Potomac, but retaining possession of Maryland Heights. This position is extremely strong; the hills are precipitous, and were manned with heavy guns, so that it was impossible for Early to occupy the town at their foot. He was therefore obliged to fall back as far as Shepherdstown, where he crossed the Potomac. At first, he hoped to manœuvre Sigel out of his position, but finding this impossible, and the works too strong to assault, he determined to advance through the gaps of the mountains north of the Heights. Hagerstown and Boonsboro' had al-

ready been occupied, and on the 8th of July, Early moved ; his infantry marched as far as Frederick, on the Monocacy river, and the cavalry was ordered to strike the railroad between Baltimore and Harrisburg, on the north, burn the bridges over Gunpowder creek, east of Baltimore, and cut the railroad between that city and Washington.

It was not until the 4th of the month that the evacuation of Martinsburg was announced to Grant ; the enemy was then reported as in reality advancing, having already captured Hagerstown. "Under the circumstances," he said, "I think it advisable to hold all the force you can, about Washington, Baltimore, Cumberland, and Harper's Ferry, ready to concentrate against any advance of the enemy. . . . If Hunter is in striking distance, there ought to be veteran force enough to meet anything the enemy have, and if once put to flight, he ought to be followed as long as possible." His first thought was the advantage to be taken of Early's flight, which he already anticipated.

Hunter, however, was not within striking distance. His troops did not all reach Charleston until the 4th of July ; on that day, he himself arrived at Parkersburg, and was met with the news that Early had driven Sigel out of Martinsburg, and occupied the line of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad in force. Together with this intelligence, the Secretary of War sent an urgent order to hurry the troops forward as fast as possible. Every step had already been taken to expedite their movement from Charleston, but the elements were adverse. An unprecedented drought had reduced the water in the Ohio river to the lowest stage. The vessels



of lightest draught, those built expressly to run at all seasons on the fluctuating waters of this remarkable stream,—were continually grounded, and the troops were obliged to land and march around the bars. They could easily wade from the steamers to the shore, without wetting their knees. Frequently the vessels could not pass, even when thus lightened, and small boats, above the shallows, transported the men to other points, where they were again obliged to stop short. The movement was thus so impeded that four or five days were lost. Hunter remained at Parkersburg until the 8th, superintending and hastening the transportation of the troops by rail, to New creek and Cumberland. All the resources of the road were put in operation, and trains were running night and day. On the 9th, he arrived at Cumberland, on the Baltimore and Ohio road.

Meanwhile, the consternation at the capital had been extreme, and the mismanagement still worse. On the 5th of July, Halleck announced to Grant: "There has been no telegraphic communication with Harper's Ferry since yesterday, a little after noon; but we hear that Sigel had reached Maryland Heights and withdrawn all troops from south side of river, destroying bridges. We can learn nothing whatever of Hunter. . . . The line from the Monocacy to Harper's Ferry has been cut, and the reinforcements sent from here fell back to the Monocacy. . . . We have nothing reliable in regard to the enemy's force. Some accounts, probably very exaggerated, state it to be between twenty and thirty thousand. If one half that number, we cannot meet it in the field, until Hunter's troops arrive." Grant replied:

"If the enemy cross into Maryland or Pennsylvania, I can send an army corps from here to meet them, or cut their return off south." Meade was ordered, the same day, to send one good division and all his dismounted cavalry to City Point, to be forwarded at once to Washington. "We want now to crush out and destroy any force the enemy have sent north. Force enough can be spared from here to do it." Grant, indeed, was far from being alarmed. On the contrary, he regarded this as an excellent opportunity for destroying an important part of Lee's command. "Hunter," he said, "has got a portion of his force up to the enemy, and is concentrating the balance as rapidly as possible. If they succeed in nearly annihilating Early, Breckenridge, etc., Hunter will be able to move through to Charlottesville, and utterly destroy the railroad and canals without the help of the troops sent from here." It was only success and further effort that the advance of Early suggested to his mind. Again on the 6th, he said: "I think there is no doubt but Early's corps is near the Baltimore and Ohio road, and if it can be caught and broken up, it will be highly desirable to do so."

On the 7th, he telegraphed: "All of Sigel's operations from the beginning of the war have been so unsuccessful that I think it advisable to relieve him from all duty, at least until present troubles are over. I do not feel certain at any time that he will not, after abandoning stores, artillery, and trains, make a successful retreat to some safe place." This was in consequence of a statement of Halleck that Sigel had abandoned a large amount of public

stores at Martinsburg. The same day, Halleck telegraphed that Sigel had been removed, and General Howe sent to take his place until Hunter arrived.

On the 8th, Halleck sent another alarming message: "Latest despatches state that a heavy column of the enemy have crossed the Monocacy, and is moving on Urbana. Sigel and Couch say that scouts, prisoners, and country people confirm previous reports of the enemy's force; viz.: some twenty or thirty thousand. . . . If you propose to cut off this raid, and not merely to secure our depôts, we must have more forces here; indeed, if the enemy's strength is as great as represented, it is doubtful if the militia can hold all of our defences." On the 9th of July, came still another despatch in the same strain. "Hunter's army moves so slow, and the railroad is so broken up, that I fear he will be too late to give us much aid. Enemy around Maryland Heights, at Hagerstown, Boonsboro', and Middletown, and threatening Frederick." Later, on the same day: "Nothing further from Hunter. I do not deem it safe to withdraw any force from Harper's Ferry, until he forms a junction." The Nineteenth corps, which had been ordered from New Orleans, was at this crisis, entering the James, and Grant replied: "If you think it necessary, order the Nineteenth corps, as it arrives at Fortress Monroe, to Washington. About the 18th or 20th, is the time I should like to have a large force here, but if the rebel force now north can be captured or destroyed, I would willingly postpone aggressive operations, to destroy them, and could send, in addition to the Nineteenth corps, the balance of the Sixth corps."



Later in the day, he telegraphed : " I have ordered the remainder of the Sixth corps to Washington."

When he transferred these troops from the army of the Potomac, Grant said to Meade : " The rebels have crossed the Monocacy, and Halleck gives it as his opinion that one-third of Lee's army is with them. They are now calling urgently for troops, and I am in hopes with Wright, the enemy will not be able to get back." The same day he set forth his policy to Halleck in the usual style : " Forces enough to defeat all that Early has with him, should get in his rear, *south of him*, and follow him up sharply, *leaving him to go north*, defending depôts, towns, etc., with small garrisons, and the militia. If the President thinks it advisable that I should go to Washington in person, I can start in an hour after receiving notice, leaving everything here on the defensive."

This mention of the President called forth from Lincoln himself a remarkable request. " Your despatch to General Halleck, referring to what I may think in the present emergency, is shown me. . . . What I think is, that you should provide to retain your hold where you are, certainly ; and *bring the rest with you, personally*, and make a vigorous effort to defeat the enemy's force in this vicinity. I think there is really a fair chance to do this, if the movement is prompt. This is what I think—upon your suggestion, and is not an order." Grant replied : ". . . I think, on reflection, it would have a bad effect for me to leave here ; and with Ord at Baltimore, and Hunter and Wright, with the forces following the enemy up, could do no good. I have great faith that the enemy will

never be able to get back with much of his force.”\* The President only needed information to be equally calm ; and replied : “ Yours of 10.30 P.M., yesterday, received, and very satisfactory ;” but he added what, doubtless, some weak soldier had suggested : “ The enemy will learn of Wright’s arrival, and, then, the difficulty will be to unite Wright and Hunter, south of the enemy, before he will re-cross the Potomac.” The contrast is marked between the flurried, anxious, fearful despatches that Grant received, and the calm, brave, sanguine ones he sent.

The general-in-chief was indeed all this while preparing to take advantage of any great subtraction

\* “ Your despatch to General Halleck, referring to what I may think in the present emergency is shown me. General Halleck says we have absolutely no force here fit to go to the field. He thinks that with the hundred day men and invalids we have here we can defend Washington, and, scarcely, Baltimore. Besides these, there are about 8,000 not very reliable, under Howe at Harper’s Ferry, with Hunter approaching that point very slowly, with what number I suppose you know better than we. Wallace, with some odds and ends, and part of what came up with Ricketts, was so badly beaten yesterday, at Monocacy, that what is left can attempt no more than to defend Baltimore. What we shall get in from Pennsylvania and New York, will scarcely be worth counting, I fear. Now what I think is,” etc.—*Lincoln to Grant, July 10, 2.30 P.M.*

“ I have sent from here a whole corps commanded by an excellent officer, besides over 3,000 other troops. One division of the Nineteenth corps, 6,000 strong, is now on its way to Washington, one steamer loaded with these troops having passed Fortress Monroe to-day. This force, under Wright, will be able to compete with the whole force under Early. Before more troops can be sent from here, Hunter will be able to join Wright with at least 10,000 men, besides a force sufficient to hold Maryland Heights. I think, on reflection,” etc.—*Grant to Lincoln, June 10, 10.30 P.M.*

from Lee's command. On the 10th of July, he said to Meade: "Taking all together, everything looks favorable to me, but I want to avoid the possibility of Lee getting off, with a great part of his force, without taking advantage of it." On the 11th: "If Hill's corps has gone, we must find out where it has gone, and take advantage of its absence. . . . If they have gone to Washington, we will try to carry Petersburg, before detaching from this army." Hill, however, it was soon discovered, had not left Lee.

Meantime, General Lewis Wallace, in command of the Middle Department, taking Rickett's division of the Sixth corps, all that had yet arrived from Petersburg, and his own command, composed principally of new and undisciplined troops, pushed out from Baltimore, with great promptness, and met the enemy in force, on the Monocacy river, near the crossing of the railroad bridge, a point not more than twenty-five miles from Washington. Although his force was not sufficient to ensure success, he fought the enemy, on the 9th, making a gallant stand; but Early drove him back, and crossed the Monocacy in the night. Wallace retired toward Baltimore, leaving the capital completely uncovered: there was absolutely no force whatever between the enemy and Washington. Nevertheless, this action did good service to the national cause, for it delayed the rebels another day, and thus allowed time for Wright to reach the capital, with the two remaining divisions of the Sixth corps.

From the Monocacy, Early moved direct on Washington, his advance reaching Rockville on the evening of the 10th of July. He bivouacked on the



Georgetown road, not ten miles from the fortifications. At daylight on the 11th, his column was in motion again; the infantry turned to the left, and arrived in front of Fort Stevens, seven miles from the city, at noon, when he discovered that the works were feebly manned. Early had Rodes's division in front, and ordered him to throw out skirmishers, and move into the works, if possible. But before Rodes could be brought up, a column of national infantry filed into the defences, and a heavy artillery fire was opened on Early, now moving by the flank. All hope of obtaining possession of the fort by surprise was lost: the Sixth corps had arrived. Early consumed the remainder of the day in reconnoitring, and found, as might have been expected, that the works were everywhere of the most elaborate and scientific character. He was still, however, determined to make an assault on the 12th; but exaggerated reports came to him in the night, of the arrival of two national corps from the James; and at daybreak, he rode to the front, and found the parapet lined with troops. He remained in front of the fortifications all day on the 12th, and during the afternoon a heavy reconnoissance was thrown out by the national commanders, to ascertain the enemy's position and force. Two hundred and eighty men were killed or wounded on the national side, and the rebel loss was probably as great. At dark, Early began to retire, satisfied that to remain longer would ensure the destruction of his entire command. He moved back by Rockville, in the direction of Edward's Ferry.

Early had not shown any extraordinary genius or vigor in this movement, about which there was no-

thing brilliant, except the audacity of the conception. Although he had arrived before Harper's Ferry on the 4th, it was not until the 8th, that his army advanced from that vicinity. He was delayed for a day on the Monocacy, when every day was of inestimable value; and although he arrived in front of Fort Stevens sooner than Wright, he failed to take advantage of his only possible opportunity. At that time, there was absolutely no force inside the works, except heavy artillery regiments, detachments from the invalid corps, and men enlisted for a hundred days, worth almost or quite nothing as soldiers. Even on the 12th, however, the number of troops under Wright was far less than his own; and if Early had any object or meaning whatever in his campaign, he should even then have attacked the fortifications. He went thither, doubtless, for that purpose, and he knew in advance that every appliance of the military art must have been exhausted in constructing the defences of Washington. He could hardly have been surprised at their strength, but after simply inspecting the works, he turned ignominiously away.

Meanwhile, there had been great confusion and alarm, not only at the capital, but at Baltimore, and all over the North. Washington had really been in very little danger, for the works were so admirable that the merest handful of men could hold off an army until reinforcements arrived. But the rebels were within seven miles of the President's house; the convalescents from the hospitals were ordered to the trenches, and the clerks in the departments marched out under the quartermaster-general. Baltimore also was menaced, though the threat

was insignificant ; and both cities were filled with country people fleeing from the enemy. The bridges had been destroyed and the telegraph wires cut between the capital and the North ; mills, workshops, and factories, in the environs, were demolished ; the Baltimore and Ohio railroad was torn up for thirty miles ; contributions of money and supplies were levied on the towns and villages ; the houses of prominent citizens were burned. Halleck announced in pitiful terms : " Enemy close to our lines on Rockville Creek, skirmishing with our cavalry and pickets. . . . Militia ordered from New York to Baltimore delayed by the Governor, for some reason not explained. Pennsylvania will do nothing to help us." Unmilitary people were greatly alarmed ; and it must be acknowledged that the management of the chief of staff of the army did not betray the clear-headedness of a calm and undisturbed intelligence. The President and the Secretary of War showed no confidence in his capacity, but interfered constantly, making matters worse ; while of half a dozen subordinate generals, no one knew who commanded the other. As has been seen, the President appealed to Grant to remove the army of the Potomac from before Richmond, thus risking, if not abandoning, all that he had gained ; and the North was mortified and frightened at the apparent danger, in the fourth year of the war, of the capture of the national capital.

On the 12th of July, the Assistant-Secretary of War sent the following remarkable despatch to Grant : " Nothing can possibly be done here for want of a commander. General Augur commands the



defences of Washington, with McCook and a lot of brigadier-generals under him. Wright commands his own corps. General Gillmore has been assigned to the temporary command of those troops of the Nineteenth corps in the city of Washington ; General Ord to command the Eighth corps and all other troops in the Middle Department, leaving Wallace to command the city alone. But there is no head to the whole, and it seems indispensable that you should at once appoint one. Hunter will be the ranking officer, if he ever gets up, but he will not do ; indeed, the Secretary of War directs me to tell you, in his judgment Hunter ought instantly to be relieved, having proven himself far more incapable than even Sigel. He also directs me to say that *advice or suggestions from you will not be sufficient. General Halleck will not give orders except as he receives them.* The President will give none, and till you direct positively and explicitly what is to be done, everything will go on in the deplorable and fatal way in which it has gone on, for the past week." Thus did every one, civilian and soldier, lean upon Grant, and thus did those who might perhaps have relieved him of some share of his varied responsibility, make manifest the necessity for his support. His reply to Dana was a despatch to Halleck, in these words : "Give orders assigning Major-General Wright to supreme command of all troops moving against the enemy, regardless of the rank of other commanders. He should get outside of the trenches with all the force he possibly can, and should push Early to the last moment, supplying himself from the country."

Thus, notwithstanding the mortification inflicted

on the North, the purely military gains of Early were insignificant. He was now in full retreat in his turn, and Grant had ordered troops from east and west upon his path, sufficient under vigorous commanders to annihilate him. The railroads and the telegraph lines were quickly repaired; the little rebel force in the neighborhood of Baltimore disappeared; the Nineteenth corps arrived in piecemeal, after the rebels had retired; and on the 13th, Wright was in full pursuit of Early.

And now came a period of confusion and distracted counsels, of blunders in the cabinet and mismanagement in the field, almost unparalleled during the war. Grant had constantly insisted on the imperative necessity of one military head at Washington, or the vicinity, to control the operations there. The telegraph wires were frequently broken between the capital and City Point, making it necessary to transmit messages part of the way by steamer; it then took from twenty-four to thirty-six hours for despatches to pass and an answer to be returned; so that orders were frequently given and information was subsequently received, showing a different state of facts from that on which they had been based. This, of course, occasioned an apparent contradiction, embarrassing to those who received the orders, and rendering operations inefficient which might otherwise have met with decided, or even brilliant success. It was, besides, contrary to all Grant's instincts and practice, as a soldier, to interfere in the details of the proceedings of his subordinates. His habit was always to select the man he thought best for a position, lay down for him the object of his campaign and the general plan by which it was to be

attained, and then leave him to work out the result in his own way. He believed invariably that interference with the movements of commanders on the spot, by one at a distance, unable to see or know the fluctuating emergencies of battle, or a campaign, until after they had occurred,—was fatal to military success. Again and again, he urged the appointment of a single commander, for all the troops in the Potomac Valley; again and again, such action was delayed; and when, in deference to his positive order to Halleck, Wright was appointed to command the troops in the field, the President promptly excused the act to Hunter, and assured him that its effect should be only temporary.\* Again and again, Grant directed Halleck to give orders on his own responsibility, he being the senior officer near the field of operations; but again and again, Halleck declined.

Grant was also positive and clear in his general views of the object of the campaign that should be fought at the North. Either, operations on the

\* "On the 15th, by telegram from Major-General Halleck, the troops of the West Virginia army were placed under the command of Major-General Wright, then at Poolsville. By this order, General Hunter, although still in command of the department, was left without troops. Under this impression he wrote to President Lincoln, asking, respectfully but peremptorily, to be relieved of command. The President replied, explaining that the order transferring the West Virginia troops to the command of Major-General Wright was only intended to be temporary in its effect, and to apply while those troops were necessarily serving outside the department commanded by General Hunter. He concluded by a very pressing and flattering request that he should retain his position. This request was accepted by General Hunter as a command."—*Official Report of Colonel Strother, Chief of Staff to General Hunter.*



Potomac should have for their aim the complete destruction of Early's army, by moving south of it, and so cutting it off from all communication with other rebel commands ; or, if this proved impracticable, that army should be driven so far into the Valley, that the national forces could resume an offensive campaign against Gordonsville and Charlottesville. On the 13th of July, he said to Dana : " Boldness is all that is wanted to drive the enemy out of Maryland." On the 14th, to Halleck : " It seems to me that by promptly pushing the enemy, he can be driven from Maryland with great loss. . . Not being able to communicate with all the commanders, it will be hard to get anything like unity of action, but if they will push boldly from all quarters, the enemy will certainly be destroyed." And on the same day, after further news of Early : " If the enemy has left Maryland, as I suppose he has, he should have upon his heels, veterans, militia-men, men on horseback, and everything that can be got to follow, to eat out Virginia clear and clean, as far as they go, so that crows flying over it, for the balance of the season, will have to carry their provender with them." He did not intend that another invading force should find supplies.

Early retreated by Rockville and Poolsville, to the Potomac, which he crossed on the 14th, at Conrad and Edward's Ferries. That afternoon, the national cavalry came up with his rear-guard, but only a skirmish ensued ; and he rested in the neighborhood of Leesburg, in Loudon county, until the 16th. By this time, Hunter had arrived at Harper's Ferry ; his advanced division, with a detachment of cavalry, was sent to harass the rebels in flank, as

they passed through Loudon county, while Crook and Averill were at Martinsburg. On the 15th, Hunter's troops were ordered to report to Wright; but a junction was not effected until the 17th, at Purcellville, on which day the rebels crossed the Blue Ridge, at Snicker's Gap, and entered the Valley of the Shenandoah. Wright followed as far as the Gap, pushing his cavalry across the Shenandoah river. They made a dash at the enemy's trains, capturing a number of wagons and mules, and bringing off sixty prisoners. But Early was a day in advance, and the pursuit was continued only far enough to verify the rebel retreat. On the 20th, however, Averill moved out from Martinsburg, and utterly routed a detached rebel force, under Ramseur, larger than his own, capturing four guns, and killing and wounding several hundred men. Early's rear thus became greatly exposed, and he fell back as far as Strasburg, reaching that place on the 22nd. On the 23rd, Wright was again at Washington.

The pursuit had not been vigorous, and as soon as Grant perceived that Wright was likely to inflict no serious injury on Early, he became anxious to return the Sixth corps as rapidly as possible to the lines in front of Petersburg. On the 16th of July, he said to Halleck: "There can be no use in Wright's following the enemy, with the latter a day ahead, after he has passed beyond our communications. I want, if possible, to get the Sixth and Nineteenth corps here to use them before the enemy can get Early back. . . As soon as the rebel army is known to have passed Hunter's forces, recall Wright, and send him back here with all dispatch; and also send the Nineteenth corps. If the enemy have any

notion of returning, the fact will be developed before Wright can be sent back." He had constantly in mind the possibility of an opportunity for aggressive movements in Meade or Butler's front. "If I find further detachments have been sent from here, I will make a determined push to obtain a firm foothold that will ultimately secure Richmond."

But although thus directing the return of Wright, as soon as it was feasible, Grant was far from neglecting the capital. His precautions, however, were all offensive ones. In the despatch of the 16th, already quoted, he said: "With Hunter in the Shenandoah Valley, and always between the enemy and Washington, force enough can always be had to check the invasion, until reinforcements can go from here. This does not prevent Hunter from following the enemy to Gordonsville and Charlottesville, if he can do it with his own force, and such other troops as he can get. But he should be cautious not to allow himself to be squeezed out to one side, so as to make it necessary to fall back into Western Virginia, to save his army. If he does have to fall back, *it should be in front of the enemy*, and with force always between the latter and the crossings of the Potomac." If this had been Hunter's strategy in the retreat from Lynchburg, his own command might indeed have suffered, but the invasion of Early could never have occurred.\*

\* "Before the Sixth and Nineteenth corps can get to Washington, the enemy will have developed his intentions of stopping, if he thinks of returning to Maryland. In that case, Hunter should stop at Winchester, keeping the cavalry out as far as he can, watching the movements of the enemy. If he has not the force to attack with, he should not attack, but move forward only



But Hunter declared that he had not one-third troops enough to guard the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and Halleck urged vehemently and repeatedly that a larger available force should be left in the neighborhood of Washington; on the 19th, he set forth his views in an elaborate letter; and in deference to these opinions, Grant replied: "You may retain Wright's command until the departure of Early is assured, or other forces collected, to make its presence no longer necessary." He had no notion, however, of allowing these troops to remain purely on the defensive, and in the same despatch, inquired: "If Early has halted about Berryville, what is there to prevent Wright and Hunter from attacking him?" On the 22nd, after further representations from Halleck, in the same strain, he said: "I telegraphed several days ago, to retain Wright and the other forces until the retreat of Early was fully assured, and asked if Wright and Hunter were not strong enough to attack him. You need not send any force back until the main force of the enemy are known to have left the Valley. Is Wright still where he can make connection with Hunter? If the two can push the enemy back, and destroy railroads from Charlottesville to Gordonsville, I would prefer that service to having them here." The difference between Grant

as the enemy moves back, and always be prepared to move north of the Potomac, without loss, if advanced upon by a superior force. . . If the enemy have not gone up the Valley, of course, Hunter should not go that way. The idea is *he should be between the enemy and Washington*, going as far as he can, never allowing himself to be drawn into an unequal fight south of the Potomac and outside of fortifications."—*Grant to Halleck, July 18.*

and Halleck was that one desired to defend Washington by concentrating troops at and around the fortifications, while the other was bent on accomplishing the same object by routing the enemy and driving him out of the Valley.

It seemed besides impossible for some minds to comprehend that the operations along the Potomac and in the Valley of Virginia were subsidiary; that misfortune there might be the price—not too dear—of success before Richmond; or that a defence, even if maintained with sacrifice and difficulty, at the North, was a result both expedient and desirable, so long as the chief national army lost none of the advantages it had acquired. The movements of Early were intended as distractions; they were meant to frighten the government and the people of the North, and to compel Grant to let go his hold on the rebel capital and army. They did alarm many, soldiers as well as civilians, but they never disturbed Grant. He never dreamed of relaxing his grasp on Lee, or abandoning his position threatening the Southern railroads. He not only put away promptly every suggestion of removing his principal force to Washington, but was watching closely, during all this season of anxiety on the Potomac, for a new chance of attacking Lee.

On the 23rd, he had information of Early's arrival at Strasburg, fifty miles south of the Potomac, and at once determined to make an advance in front of Meade, before the forces in the Valley could reinforce Lee. That day he sent the following orders to Halleck: "If Wright has returned back to Washington, send him immediately back here, retaining, however, the portion of the Nineteenth

corps now in Washington for further orders. Early is undoubtedly returning here to enable the enemy to detach troops to go to Georgia. Hunter's troops must be tired. I would say, therefore, for him to take up such advanced positions, suggested by him, as in his judgment will best protect the line of the Potomac. If Wright and Hunter have started after the enemy, with the view of following on to the road from Charlottesville to Gordonsville, let them go."

But Hunter now telegraphed to the President direct, that, without the assistance of Wright, he could not prevent the return of Early, and Halleck announced to Grant: "The President, who has seen all the despatches on the subject, directs me to say that you alone can judge of the importance of sending the Sixth corps to the army of the Potomac, or its operating with General Hunter against Gordonsville and Charlottesville, and that you alone must decide the question." On the 24th, the general-in-chief replied: "I would prefer a complete smash up of the enemy's roads about Gordonsville and Charlottesville, to having the same force here. If Wright and Hunter can do this job, let them do it." No trait in Grant's character was more clearly defined than his readiness to conform to new situations and to avail himself of unexpected and even unwished-for emergencies. He cared nothing for consistency in his plans so long as they were successful; he had not a particle of pride, to prevent his abandoning the strategy, or countermanding the orders of yesterday, if, to-day, the strategy was inapplicable, or the orders were inexpedient; and he would revert to his original views and intentions on



the morrow, if circumstances again rendered them appropriate.

Halleck, however, was of different stuff, and replied, rather sulkily, to Grant: "General Wright, in accordance with your orders, was about to embark for City Point. I have directed him to wait your further orders. I shall exercise no further discretion in this matter, but shall carry out such orders as you may give." This did not suit the general-in-chief, and he telegraphed promptly: "Despatches being so long between here and Washington, orders must be given from there to meet pressing emergencies." At this very moment, when Halleck was declining to assume responsibilities, Early had again turned his forces towards the Potomac, and was marching down the Valley; and on the 26th, Grant renewed his instructions: "Crook's despatches indicate the probability of another raid north by the enemy. It takes a long time for despatches to come here and go back, during which conditions may change; consequently, it is absolutely necessary that some one in Washington should give orders and make dispositions of all the forces within reach of the line of the Potomac." To this, the Secretary of War himself replied: "General Halleck has been ordered to give, subject to your direction, such military orders as may be necessary in the present juncture, in accordance with the suggestion made in your telegram of yesterday."

Nevertheless, the government was still unconvinced of the need of a military head at this theatre of operations. As early as the 18th of July, Grant had telegraphed: "To prevent a recurrence of what has just taken place in Maryland, I deem it abso-

lutely necessary that the Departments of the Susquehannah, the Middle, Western Virginia, and Washington be merged into one department, with one head, who shall absolutely control the whole. . . I should nominate General W. B. Franklin for such command." To this, he received no answer, and on the 20th, applied again: "I have heard nothing of the determination come to, on my recommendation about merging the four departments about Washington into one." Halleck promptly objected to the proposition. He laid the despatch before the Secretary of War, but replied to Grant: "I see no good reason for removing or superseding General Augur: he is capable and efficient. General Franklin would not give satisfaction."

Perceiving the opposition that thwarted his plans, Grant, on the 24th, addressed the President direct, in the following words: "After the late raid into Maryland had expended itself, seeing the necessity of having the four departments of the Susquehannah, the Middle, West Virginia, and Washington under one head, I recommended that they be merged into one, and named General Franklin as a suitable person to command the whole. I still think it highly essential that these four departments should be in one command. I do not insist that the departments should be broken up, nor do I insist upon General Franklin commanding. All that I ask is that one general officer, in whom I and yourself have confidence, should command the whole. . . . During the last raid, the wires happened to be down between here and Fortress Monroe, and the cable broken between there and Cherrystone. This made it take from twelve to twenty-four hours, each

way, for despatches to pass. Under such circumstances, it was difficult for me to give orders or directions, because I could not tell how the conditions might change during the transit of despatches."

The President replied by desiring Grant to name a time when he could meet him at Fort Monroe. But at this juncture, the general-in-chief was engaged in important operations before both Richmond and Petersburg, and it was impossible for him to leave the front. The matter, therefore, remained still longer in abeyance, and further disasters in consequence occurred.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

Grant's anxiety in regard to Sherman—Operations to prevent reinforcement of Johnston—Orders to Sherman—Prevision of Sherman—Relations of Grant and Sherman—Johnston relieved by Hood—Attacks of Hood—Defeat of Hood—Death of McPherson—Unselfishness of Logan and Blair—Grant's opinion of Butler—Disagreement of W. F. Smith with Butler and Meade—W. F. Smith allowed leave of absence—Operations in front of Petersburg—Origin of Burnside's mine—Description of mine—Effort to distract attention of Lee—Hancock and Sheridan moved to north bank of the James—Operations at Deep Bottom—Half of Lee's army attracted to north side—Precautions to deceive the enemy—Rapid return of Hancock and Sheridan—Massing of Grant's forces—Orders for assault of July 30th—Well-grounded hopes of success—Explosion of mine—Delay in advance of assaulting column—Consternation of enemy—Advance of Burnside unopposed—Unnecessary halt of column—Confusion among the supports—Burnside ordered to push his troops—Ord directed to support Burnside—Black troops advance into crater, increasing confusion—Rebels recover from shock of explosion—Plant artillery to command crater—Assault of rebels—Burnside ordered to withdraw—Second assault of rebels—Capture and loss of national troops—Complete defeat of Burnside—Criticism of operations—Ledlie and Burnside especially blamed—Burnside granted leave of absence—Delicate position of Grant—Relations with subordinates—Grant's persistency—Advance ordered against Weldon road.

DURING the entire month of July, the responsibilities and anxieties of Grant had been more varied and complicated than ever. Not only was he compelled to direct the details of operations at Washington and along the Potomac—in a region which imperatively required the actual presence of a commander ;

not only was he watching closely the movements of Lee, with a view, if opportunity offered by any further weakening of the rebel front, to penetrate the lines before Petersburg; but the situation of Sherman was now becoming precarious, and demanded the careful attention and co-operation of the general-in-chief. After the unsuccessful assault on Kenesaw mountain, Sherman had turned to the right, and on the 2nd of July, by a movement curiously similar to Grant's flanking operations in the Wilderness, compelled the rebels to abandon a position that was absolutely impregnable, and to retreat across the Chattahoochee river. He remained on the north bank of this stream, resting his men and bringing up supplies, until the 17th of the month, and then resumed operations, crossing the Chattahoochee without serious difficulty, destroying a large portion of the railroad to Augusta, in the rebel rear, and driving the enemy into the lines around Atlanta.

Atlanta would undoubtedly fall, but every step taken by Sherman had extended his long line of communications and added to his eventual danger. The rebels constantly compared his advance to Napoleon's upon Moscow, and predicted a corresponding disaster in the end. The general opposed to him evidently desired to draw him as far as possible from his base, and then cut his communications and attack him with a superior force. This it was Grant's duty to prevent. Sherman could indeed carry on his own campaign: he could drive Johnston steadily back, and do his best to maintain the line to Chattanooga, in his rear; but only the general-in-chief, controlling all the armies, could

direct the strategy of all so as to preclude the possibility of reinforcing Johnston's command.

Grant, accordingly, marked out his own policy and that of his subordinates to accomplish this end. On the 15th of July, he said to Meade: "I see, from the Atlanta papers, that they look upon the loss of that place as probable, but congratulate themselves that Sherman could not stay a month, if he had it. Intimations seem strong that Johnston will fall back to Macon, where he thinks he will not be followed for some time, when they will fall upon Sherman with an overwhelming force." Such a force could only go from Lee; and in view of this contingency, Grant proposed to send Sheridan in the direction of the Weldon and Danville roads, to cut them both, if possible, and thus impede the transportation of troops from Virginia to Johnston's army. "To cut both roads," he said, "will be a great help to us." The same day, he said to Halleck: "There is every indication now, judging from the tone of the Southern press, that unless Johnston is reinforced, Atlanta will not be defended. They seem to calculate largely upon driving Sherman out, by keeping his line of communications cut. If he can supply himself with ordnance and quartermasters' stores, and partially with subsistence, he will find no difficulty in staying *until a permanent line can be opened with the south coast.*" In order to secure such supplies, Grant directed Halleck to transfer a large portion of the stores at Nashville to Chattanooga; and "with sixty days' provisions at the latter place," he said, "the country will supply the balance. Sherman will, once in Atlanta, devote himself to collecting the



resources of the country. He will take everything the people have, and will then issue, from the stores so collected, to rich and poor alike. As he will take all their stock, they will have no use for grain, further than is necessary for bread."

Grant's principal apprehension, however, was that the rebels would attempt to concentrate their two important commands; either detaching from Lee against Sherman, or, if Atlanta fell, bringing most of Johnston's army to Richmond, with the view of first driving Meade and Butler off, and then uniting to fall in force on Sherman. "They will fail," he said, "if they attempt this programme. My greatest fear is of their sending troops to Johnston first. Sherman ought to be notified of the possibility of a corps going from here, and should be prepared to take up a good defensive position, in case one is sent, one which he could hold against such an increase."

To Sherman himself, on the 16th of July, after Early had fallen back from Washington, he telegraphed: "The attempted invasion of Maryland having failed to give the enemy a firm foothold, they are now returning, with possibly twenty-five thousand troops. All the men they have here, beyond a sufficiency to hold their strong fortifications, will be an element of weakness, to eat up their supplies. It is not improbable, therefore, that you will find, in the next fortnight, reinforcements in your front to the number indicated above. I advise, therefore, that if you get to Atlanta, you set about destroying railroads, as far to the east and south of you as possible. Collect all the stores of the country for your own use, and select a front that

you can hold until help can be had." Sherman replied, the same day: "I had anticipated all possible chances, and am accumulating all the stores possible at Chattanooga and Alatoona; but I don't fear Johnston with reinforcements of twenty thousand, if he will take the offensive; but I recognize the danger arising from my long line, by the superiority of the enemy's cavalry." A few days later, he said: "If General Grant can keep Lee from reinforcing this army for a week, I think I can dispose of it."

It will be remembered that, after the defeat of Sturgis in Northern Mississippi, Sherman, in June, had ordered A. J. Smith, then returning with his command from the Red river expedition, to move out from Memphis against Forrest, and prevent his reaching the Tennessee railroads, the only national communications between Chattanooga and the Ohio river. On the 19th of July, Grant had news of a battle between Smith and Forrest, in which the rebels were badly beaten, and telegraphed at once to Sherman: "Smith ought to be instructed to keep a close watch on Forrest, and not permit him to gather strength and move into Middle Tennessee." On the 20th, Sherman answered that Smith had already received the very orders suggested, viz.: "to hang on to Forrest, and prevent his coming to Tennessee. I will, however, renew the order." This was not the only occasion when Sherman issued Grant's orders before he received them. The views of the two commanders generally concurred, and when this was not the case, or even when Sherman differed from his chief, as soon as he was possessed of the views and orders of his supe-

rior, he made them his study, and conformed his conduct to them as if they were his own.\* There never was a more admirable example of subordination than that so constantly offered by this great soldier, who as constantly proved himself fitted for command.

On the 17th of July, deserters coming in to Meade's camp reported that an immediate attack was proposed by Lee; and Grant sent word to Butler to be on his guard. "They say that Johnston is gone up, unless he can be reinforced, and before they can reinforce him, we must be driven back. . . Of course it is not known where the attack is to be made, or whether it is to be made at all; but we want to be prepared for the enemy, *if he should give us such an advantage.*" To Meade he said: "It is very apparent to me that the enemy must come out, for if they do not relieve Johnston, nothing but unforeseen circumstances can save him. To send such reinforcements, they should try to cripple us here. We should be ready, not only to repel, but to follow up the enemy, if he should move out of his lines." The attack was not made, and deserters stated that so many of them had come within Grant's lines that the rebel leaders believed their plans to have been exposed. The arrangements to repel the expected assault, however, prevented the departure of Sheridan on his contemplated raid, and on the 20th, important intelligence arrived from Georgia. The blow there had been

\* "My opinions on all matters are very strong, but if I am possessed properly of the views and orders of my superiors, I make them my study, and conform my conduct to them as though they were my own."—*Sherman to Grant, May 28, 1865.*



struck, without waiting for the co-operation of Lee.

The rebel general, Johnston, had fallen into disfavor with his government, and with many of the people of the South, because of the policy of constant retreat which he maintained in the presence of Sherman; and on the 17th of July, he was relieved from command, and his place given to Hood, a bold but indiscreet subordinate.\* "This change indicates," said the rebel newspapers, "that there will be no more retreating, but that Atlanta will be defended at all hazards, and to the last extremity. . . We have also every reason to hope that Sherman's rear will be cut in the next ten days." On the 20th, accordingly, Hood came out of his lines and attacked Sherman with great vehemence, but was disastrously repelled; on the 22nd, he made another assault, with similar result; and again on the 28th, when he received the most

\* "I am directed by the Secretary of War to inform you that as you have failed to arrest the advance of the enemy to the vicinity of Atlanta, far in the interior of Georgia, and express no confidence that you can defeat or repel him, you are hereby relieved from the command of the army and Department of Tennessee, which you will immediately turn over to General Hood."—*Cooper, rebel Adjutant-General, to Johnston, July 17.*

"Your despatch of yesterday received and obeyed. Command of the army and Department of Tennessee has been transferred to General Hood. As to the alleged cause of my removal, I assert that Sherman's army is much stronger, compared with that of Tennessee, than Grant's, compared with that of Northern Virginia. Yet the enemy has been compelled to advance much more slowly to the vicinity of Atlanta than to that of Richmond and Petersburg; and penetrated much deeper into Virginia than Georgia."—*Johnston to Cooper, July 18.*

signal defeat of the campaign. The rebel losses, in these three battles, were estimated by Sherman to be double or treble those which he sustained. But Atlanta remained in the possession of the enemy.

In the action of the 22nd, the national army lost one of its finest officers. Major-General James B. McPherson had served on the staff of Grant in the earliest year of the war, had fought by his side at Donelson and Shiloh, and thereafter obtaining the command of a brigade, had steadily advanced, until at the time of his death, he was at the head of the army of the Tennessee. He was not only brilliant in achievement and gallant to a fault, clear in conception and admirable in all professional knowledge, but endowed with personal characteristics which endeared him in an unusual degree to all his associates. He was the intimate personal friend of both Grant and Sherman, and beloved by both as heartily as he was admired. There were few officers in the entire army whom the general-in-chief could not have better spared. But he died as a soldier would wish to die, in the midst of battle, in the strict performance of duty, and instantaneously. Whatever can make death glorious, was the lot of him, the youngest of Grant's great subordinates.

Logan, in virtue of rank, should have succeeded McPherson, but Sherman recommended Howard instead, who was junior to both Logan and Blair, in the army of the Tennessee, and to Hooker, who commanded a corps in Thomas's army. The matter was referred to Grant, who replied to the Secretary of War: "Sherman has conducted his campaign with great skill and success. I should therefore

confirm all his recommendations for department and corps commanders. No one can tell so well as one in immediate command the disposition that should be made of material in hand." The appointment was made; and Hooker, in consequence, asked to be relieved. His request was granted; but Logan and Blair remained in the field, and won great distinction afterwards; though none greater than that acquired by this display of unselfish patriotism.

Meanwhile, Grant had found difficulties in Virginia, that were not created by the enemy. Absolute harmony did not always reign among his generals. W. F. Smith, especially, disagreed with his superiors. He had served by turns under both Butler and Meade, and found fault with each as a commander; and each of course resented his criticisms. Still, he was a soldier of ability and experience, and notwithstanding his one great blunder before Petersburg, Grant was anxious to retain his services. On the other hand, Butler's talent, though unmistakable, was not conspicuous in the field. The general-in-chief fully appreciated the earnestness and subordination of his lieutenant, but the lack of professional knowledge and experience, and the anxiety which this lack inspired in Butler's immediate coadjutors, whether equals or subordinates, at times occasioned great uneasiness. Yet Grant was most willing to avail himself of the marked ability that Butler had displayed in administrative functions, and especially in dealing with disaffected populations.

On the 1st of July, he said to the government: "Whilst I have no difficulty with General Butler, finding him always clear in his conception of orders,



and prompt to obey, yet there is a want of knowledge how to execute, and particularly a prejudice against him as a commander that operates against his usefulness. . . . As an administrative officer, General Butler has no superior. In taking charge of a department where there are no great battles to be fought, but a dissatisfied element to control, no one could manage it better than he. If a command could be cut out, such as Mr. Dana proposed, namely: Kentucky, Illinois, and Indiana; or if the Department of the Missouri, Kansas, and the states of Illinois and Indiana could be merged together, and General Butler put over it, I think the good of the service would be subserved. I regret the necessity of asking for a change in commanders here, but General Butler not being a soldier by education or experience, is in the hands of his subordinates, in the execution of all orders military. I should feel stronger with Smith, Franklin, or J. J. Reynolds commanding the right wing of this army." "At the same time, as I have here stated, General Butler has always been prompt in his obedience to orders from me, and clear in his understanding of them. I would not therefore be willing to recommend his retirement."

There is little to add to this letter, which very completely describes Butler's military position and character, and Grant's feeling in regard to him. The government, however, delayed its action, and before any definite steps were taken, the difficulty of dealing with Smith became more apparent. His disaccord with Meade was as marked as his difference with Butler; and Grant finally declared that he could not afford to dispense with all his other

generals for the sake of retaining a single officer. Accordingly, Smith was allowed a leave of absence which was never recalled. Ord was then placed at the head of the Eighteenth corps, while Butler remained in command of the army of the James.

The battles around Atlanta and the movements in the Valley made Grant more anxious than ever to engross the attention of Lee, and prevent reinforcements being sent either to Hood or Early. During all the month of July he had been constantly watching for an offensive opportunity. When Wright was sent to Washington, the national lines on the left were necessarily drawn in as far as the Jerusalem plank road; this contraction left the Second corps free, and Hancock was held in the rear for a while, with the view of using him, in conjunction with the cavalry, against the Weldon road, as far south as Hicksford, or even Weldon itself. But the indications of an attack by Lee, already described, delayed this movement, and it was finally abandoned in favor of one on the north side of the James, designed to threaten the rebel army in the Shenandoah.

Warren now held the left flank in front of Petersburg; Burnside had the centre, and Ord, on the right, extended to the Appomattox river. Butler also held the lines at Bermuda Hundred with the Tenth corps, and maintained the position at Deep Bottom, on the north bank of the James. Hancock was in rear of Warren.

In the assaults of the 17th and 18th of June, the Ninth corps had gained a position not more than a hundred yards from the enemy's line. Just in rear of this advanced position, about two miles

from the national right on the Appomattox river, and not one mile in a direct line from the heart of Petersburg, was a deep hollow where work could be carried on entirely out of sight of the enemy. The Forty-eighth Pennsylvania regiment, composed almost wholly of miners from Schuylkill county, Pennsylvania, was stationed here, and some of the privates and non-commissioned officers suggested that a mine could be run from the hollow to a point under a battery of the enemy, immediately opposite. The idea found its way upwards to the colonel of the regiment, and was finally communicated to Burnside, who, late in June, authorized the undertaking. He subsequently mentioned the work to Meade, and received his sanction for its continuance.

Nevertheless, it was not supposed, outside of the Ninth corps, that much could be accomplished by the mine, for the engineers reported the position faulty. The battery to be destroyed was in a re-entering part of the enemy's line, exposed to an enfilading and reverse fire from points both on the right and left. It was, moreover, commanded by a hill in its rear, which it was highly probable the enemy had already fortified, and which must be gained, or the position in front would be untenable. The prosecution of the work, however, having been allowed, the men of the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania fell to with zeal. The soil was difficult, sometimes of the nature of quicksand and sometimes a heavy marl, while the only tools employed were the ordinary entrenching spade and pick; but the commander of the regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Pleasants, was himself a practical miner, full of



ingenuity and energy ; and the main gallery, five hundred and ten feet long, and twenty feet below the surface, was completed by the 17th of July. It was horizontal, but inclined downwards for a short distance from the entrance, and ended directly under the rebel parapet. The height was four and a half feet, and the width the same ; and the principal security of the walls was in the tenacity of the earth, for there were few frames. Ventilation was obtained by means of a vertical shaft sunk at some distance from the entrance, under which a fire was kept constantly burning. Two lateral galleries, each about thirty-eight feet long, ran immediately under and parallel with the enemy's works. These were to contain the magazines, and were completed by the 23rd of July. The mine was then ready for the charge.

On the 24th, Grant declared that the chances of an assault were better on Burnside's front than at any other point on the lines. Meade was unwilling to make the attempt during the absence of Wright ; but there was no probability of the speedy return of the Sixth corps, and it was important to prevent the rebels from reinforcing their armies in Georgia or the Valley. Grant, therefore, decided, first of all, to make a demonstration north of the James, having for its object the destruction of the railroads from Richmond to the South Anna river, and thus rendering the enemy wary of his situation in the Shenandoah. Lee would necessarily withdraw troops from Petersburg, to interrupt such a movement ; and unless immediately and completely successful on the northern side, Grant determined at once to explode the mine, and assault the rebel

line in front of Burnside. Accordingly, on the 25th of July, he directed the entire Second corps, and two divisions of the cavalry under Sheridan in person, to be sent to Deep Bottom, without attracting the attention of the enemy. Kautz's cavalry was also ordered to report to Sheridan, and the whole command was placed under Hancock's orders. After crossing the James, the cavalry was to advance rapidly upon the Virginia Central railroad, as near as possible to Richmond, and thence work its way towards the South Anna river; while the infantry would move against Chapin's Bluff, on the north bank of the James, and take up a line to prevent the rebels from cutting off the return of the cavalry. "When the work of destroying the railroads is accomplished," said Grant, "the whole expedition will return and resume their present places."

But, always contemplating the contingency of pronounced success, he continued: "It is barely possible that, by a bold move, this expedition may surprise the little garrison of citizen soldiery now in Richmond, and get in. *This cannot be done, however, by any cautious movement, developing our force, and making reconnoissances before attacking.* The only way in which it can be done at all is—to *ride up to the city boldly, dismount, and go in at the first point reached.* If carried in this way, the prize could be secured by hurrying up the Second corps, and sending back word here, so that other dispositions could be made."

Operations on the northern side, however, constituted only half the plan; and Grant now directed the loading of the mine in front of the

Ninth corps. On the 25th, he said to Meade: "The expedition ordered may cause such a weakening of the enemy in front of Petersburg, as to make an attack possible, in which case you would want to spring Burnside's mine." Again, on the 26th: "The information you have sent, and information received here on the subject, indicates a probability that the enemy are looking for a formidable attack, either from Bermuda Hundred or north of the James, and that they will detach from Petersburg heavily, to prevent its success. This will make your remaining corps relatively stronger against the enemy at Petersburg, than we have been since the first day. It will be well, therefore, to prepare for an assault on Burnside's front." Accordingly, on the 27th, eight thousand pounds of powder were placed in the magazines.

At this juncture, news arrived that Early had again turned towards the north, and although every man was now needed for the emergencies along his triple front, the general-in-chief was obliged to forward troops to Washington. On the 26th, he telegraphed to Butler: "The enemy are again advancing down the Shenandoah Valley. . . . Everybody is scared, and wants reinforcements. Send all of the Nineteenth corps that can possibly be dispensed with, at once." A portion of the Nineteenth corps had arrived at Fort Monroe, after the first danger at the capital was past, and had been ordered, as originally intended, to the army of the James. It was these troops which Grant now transferred to the Potomac Valley. At the same time he directed Meade: "Hasten off the cavalry that goes to Washington under my recent



order. If they can start to-morrow, they may render great service."

But the movement in front of Richmond still went on. Hancock left his position in rear of Warren, at four o'clock on the afternoon of the 26th of July, reaching the Appomattox by dark; he crossed that stream by a pontoon bridge, at Point of Rocks, and proceeded across the peninsula of Bermuda Hundred, in rear of Butler's lines. The road had been picketed by Butler's orders, and fires lighted to facilitate the night march. Before morning, the James was also crossed at Deep Bottom; and as soon as possible after daylight, the advance began. The cavalry moved out to the right, and the infantry at once drove the rebels from their works in front of the bridge-head, capturing four pieces of artillery.

Hancock advanced as far as Bailey's creek, where he found the enemy posted in well-constructed works, and in a position offering great advantages for defence. The distance between the creek and the works was a thousand yards, the intervening ground being perfectly open, while the stream itself was an obstacle that a line of battle could hardly pass under fire. After a careful examination Hancock decided that the chances of successful assault were not good, and determined to manœuvre to the right, with a view of turning the position. At about half-past three Grant was on the field, and visited the Second corps. He found the outlook not favorable, but directed Hancock, if possible, to roll up the enemy's left towards Chapin's Bluff, and thus release the cavalry. Night, however, came on before any further developments were made.

The rebels, meanwhile, had taken the alarm, and during the night of the 27th, they began hurrying troops from the south side of the James. At eight P.M., Grant announced to Meade : "The enemy commenced about two hours ago reinforcing Richmond from Petersburg. Twenty-nine car loads of troops have been seen pass the junction within that time. This will make any surprise impossible." At an early hour on the 28th, he said : "If Hancock does not crush the enemy this morning, I think it will be well to withdraw him in the night, and get him in rear of Burnside before the enemy can return, keeping the cavalry and Butler's troops to occupy the enemy." Butler, it will be remembered, had maintained a brigade at Deep Bottom since the 22nd of June, and had besides reinforced Hancock with three thousand infantry for the present movement.

At eight o'clock this day, the rebels were discovered moving in large force towards Hancock's right, evidently prepared to assume the offensive ; and at ten, Sheridan was attacked on the New-market road by a heavy body of infantry. At first his men were driven back over a ridge, on the face of which they lay quickly down in line of battle, about fifteen yards from the crest. When the enemy reached this crest, Sheridan opened fire with repeating carbines, and the rebels gave way in disorder ; the cavalry followed at once, capturing two hundred and fifty prisoners, and completely re-established the line. This affair, in which cavalry repulsed a superior force of infantry, is known as the battle of Darbytown. Sheridan lost about two hundred men. The left of the Second corps now

rested at Deep Bottom, and extended in front of Bailey's creek ; while Sheridan, who held the right, reached to the Newmarket road, with one brigade at Malvern Hill.

All this day, reinforcements in large numbers continued to arrive at the rebel front ; and Hancock accordingly drew in his line, so as to prevent the enemy from cutting him off from the river, and made every preparation to receive assault. During the afternoon, Grant again visited the Second corps ; and satisfied now that more than half of Lee's command was north of the James, he issued his orders for the movement on the other side.

Every precaution was taken to continue the misapprehension of the enemy. The assault was fixed for the 30th, and orders were issued to both Meade and Ord to cease all artillery firing until that day, and conceal the heavy pieces. "This may have the effect of convincing the enemy that we are withdrawing from Petersburg, and possibly induce him to come out and see." Hancock was to remain in position until the night of the 29th, to keep up the feint, sending, however, one division to Petersburg ; and after dark, on the 28th, Sheridan covered the pontoon bridge with grass and moss to prevent the tramp of horses being heard, and moved a division of cavalry to the south side of the river : then dismounting the men, he marched them back by daylight, so that the rebels might suppose a continuous movement of infantry was still going on towards Deep Bottom. A train of empty wagons was also moved over in full sight of the enemy ; while during the night of the 28th, Mott's division, of the Second corps, crossed in the opposite direc-



tion, and relieved Ord's troops from the trenches in front of Petersburg. These manœuvres detained the rebels on the northern side all day of the 29th, as Grant desired ; but Lee made no offensive movement against the detached and greatly inferior force before him. Nevertheless, Grant cautioned Meade : "The enemy are evidently piling everything, except a very thin line in your front, to the north side of the river." Hancock was therefore to be careful to have his command well in hand, and keep a strong line to fall behind, where the gunboats could have full play along his front. During this entire movement, the troops remained so near the shore, that the co-operation of the naval force became both important and efficient.

The Second corps was to be withdrawn immediately after dark on the 29th, followed by the cavalry ; but it was not intended to abandon the footing gained at Deep Bottom, which might prove useful in subsequent operations. Foster, however, who was to be left to hold the post, when Hancock retired, would then be confronted by more than half the rebel army ; and Grant instructed Butler : "The movement will leave the garrison at Deep Bottom in presence of a vastly superior force. The navy will want to dispose of their vessels in such a manner as to sweep all the ground in front of our troops. I wish you would communicate with Captain Smith through a staff officer, on that subject. Please caution him to make no change through the day, calculated to attract especial interest on the part of the enemy. General Foster, I think, had better level the line of rifle-pits we captured from the enemy, and move his whole force to the side of the creek first occupied by him."

The complicated nature of the operations now in progress will be better appreciated when the geography of the country is remembered. The right wing, under Hancock and Sheridan, was sixteen miles from the point where Burnside's assault was to be made ; while Warren reached out on the left, as far as the Jerusalem plank road, his own flank being greatly refused. The James and Appomattox rivers intervened between Hancock and the army of the Potomac ; and to reach the position of Burnside, the Second corps must first cross the James, at Deep Bottom, then march by night across the peninsula of Bermuda Hundred, in rear of Butler's lines, cross the Appomattox again, and afterwards march to a point in the rear of the Eighteenth corps. The movement began at dark, and by morning the Second corps had arrived in front of Petersburg.

Sheridan followed close, withdrawing from the right, by brigades. His operation was one of exceeding delicacy ; for after the Second corps had passed, the space at the mouth of the bridge, occupied by Sheridan, was so circumscribed that an offensive movement by the rebels would have threatened the annihilation of his command. Shortly after daylight, however, on the 30th, the re-crossing had been effected, and by ten o'clock, Sheridan's advanced division was well over towards the left of the army. "It will be well," said Grant, "to direct the cavalry to endeavor to get around the enemy's right flank. Whilst they will not probably succeed in turning the enemy, they will detain a large force to prevent it." Sheridan's entire movement, from the moment he started on the 26th, was attended by such anxiety and sleeplessness as to prostrate nearly

every officer and man in his command. Two entire nights, as well as all the daylight hours of four long summer days, were consumed in taking up positions, digging entrenchments, in absolute battle, or on the march. The same is true of the Second corps. But the movements of these troops drew five-eighths of Lee's command to the north side of the James, and left the road to Petersburg absolutely open, if Burnside's attempt to break the lines succeeded. On the morning of the 30th of June, the rebels had no idea but that Grant was concentrated at Deep Bottom, when his army was in reality massed in the rear of Burnside's mine.

Grant's orders to Meade for the assault had been issued on the 24th, two days before Hancock started for Deep Bottom. They were more circumstantial than he often gave to the commander of an army. "It will be necessary to concentrate all the force possible at the point on the enemy's line we expect to penetrate. All officers should be fully impressed with the absolute necessity of *pushing entirely beyond the enemy's present line*, if they should succeed in penetrating it, and of *getting back to their present line promptly, if they should not succeed in getting through*. To the right and left of the point of assault, all the artillery possible should be brought to play upon the enemy in front. . . All the reserves could be brought on the flanks of the commands nearest to the point of assault, ready to follow in, if successful. The field artillery and infantry held in the lines during the first assault should be in readiness to move at a moment's notice, either to their front, or to follow the main assault, as they should receive orders. One thing



. . should be impressed on corps commanders: if they see the enemy giving way in their front, or moving from it, to reinforce a heavily assailed portion of their lines, they should take advantage of such knowledge, and act promptly, *without waiting for orders* from army commanders."

Meade's battle orders were admirably calculated to carry out the letter and spirit of Grant's. They were submitted to the general-in-chief, who declared that they could not be improved. The Ninth corps was, of course, entitled to lead the assault, and during the night of the 29th, Burnside was to form his troops, and *prepare his parapets and abatis for the passage of the columns*; Warren was to hold the entrenchments in his front with the minimum of troops, and concentrate all his available force on his right, prepared to support the assault of Burnside: the Eighteenth corps had been placed under Meade's orders, for the movement, and Ord was directed to form his troops in rear of Burnside, and hold them in readiness to support the assault; while Hancock was expected to reach the position previously occupied by the Eighteenth corps by daylight, and be prepared either to assault or to follow up the assaulting or supporting columns. At half-past three on the morning of the 30th, Burnside was to spring the mine, and his assaulting columns move rapidly upon the breach, *seize the crest of the hill in the rear*, and effect a lodgment there. He was to be followed by Ord on the right and Warren on the left, all directing their movements to the crest, while immediately upon the explosion, all the artillery in battery was to open upon those points of the enemy's works whose fire covered the ground over which the troops

must pass. Meade's head-quarters, during the operation, were fixed at those of the Ninth corps, and corps commanders were directed to apprise him of every step in the progress of the battle. Promptness, rapidity of execution, and cordial co-operation were enjoined.

Burnside proposed to put Ferrero's colored division in the advance, but Meade objected to this, considering that a forlorn hope should be composed of the picked men of the corps. The negroes might be as good soldiers as any, but during the entire campaign, they had been employed in guarding trains, and except in one affair at Spottsylvania when the trains were attacked, the division had never been under fire. Meade, therefore, prohibited Burnside from giving the blacks the lead. Burnside, however, objected so vigorously to this change in his plans, that the matter was referred to the lieutenant-general, who approved of Meade's decision.\* Thereupon, Burnside allowed the three other division commanders to draw lots to decide which should lead; and the lot fell upon Ledlie, whom Grant afterwards pronounced the feeblest commander in the corps.

\* Burnside urged that his white troops had been for forty days in the trenches, in the immediate presence of the enemy, and were not in a condition to make a vigorous charge; that they were accustomed to the protection of covered ways, and to avoiding, not defying, the enemy's fire. He therefore preferred to give the lead to fresher men. But these arguments told against all employment of his white soldiers in the assault. If they were so unfit to lead, they were not likely to follow; and it was hard to suppose that a raw division, composed of men who had been born slaves, would do better in battle against their former masters than the veterans of the old Ninth corps. Most military men would doubtless have agreed with Meade.

On the morning of the 30th, all the arrangements seemed complete, and every expectation of brilliant success was reasonable. Only three divisions of Lee's army were south of the James, and if Burnside carried the crest of Cemetery hill, in his front, there was nothing beyond to prevent the national army from entering Petersburg.

Before daylight, Grant was with Meade at the head-quarters of the Ninth corps. Burnside was nearer the front, directing the operations of his command. The match was lighted at the appointed time, but owing to a defect in the fuse, the mine was not sprung, and Lieutenant Doughty and Sergeant Rees, of the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania regiment, volunteered to enter the gallery and ascertain the cause. They discovered that the fire had burned out where two fuses were connected, and after re-lighting the match, they came out in safety. This occasioned a delay of more than an hour; but at forty-six minutes past four the mine exploded, with a shock like that of an earthquake, tearing up the rebel works above it, and vomiting earth, men, guns, and caissons, two hundred feet into the air. The tremendous mass appeared for a moment to hang suspended in the heavens, like a huge inverted cone, the exploding powder still flashing out here and there, while the limbs and bodies of mutilated men and fragments of cannon and woodwork could be seen;—then all fell heavily to the ground again, with a second report like thunder. When the smoke and dust had cleared away, only an enormous chasm thirty feet deep, sixty wide, and a hundred and fifty long, stretched out in front of the Ninth corps, where the rebel fort had been.



One hundred and ten cannon and fifty mortars opened fire at once along Meade's front; but the advance of Burnside was delayed. The abatis in front of his works had not been removed, and the debouches made for the troops were narrow and insufficient, so that the men came out slowly. But the shock given to the enemy was so tremendous that the rebels on both sides of the crater fled in a panic from the spot, and there was no opposition whatever to the national advance. Nevertheless, it was fifteen minutes before the head of Ledlie's division reached the rebel line. The sides of the crater were of pulverized sand piled up precipitously, from which projected huge blocks of clay; the bottom was rough and broken; and when the defences of the enemy were gained, they were found to be complex and involuted, filled with traverses, pits, and bomb-proofs, forming a labyrinth nearly as difficult to cross as the crater itself. But there was still no enemy. For quite half an hour after the explosion the rebels were so paralyzed that they offered no resistance save an occasional or scattering fire. Everything was possible to the advancing column. But Ledlie did not lead his division, remaining on the side of the crater nearest the national line, and most of the time under cover: the brigade commanders therefore had no head, and when the troops arrived at the rebel works, they began to seek shelter in the broken ground. Ignorant how all-important it was to reach the crest, four hundred yards beyond, they stopped short with victory unachieved, though in their grasp.

The divisions of Potter and Wilcox advanced

immediately after Ledlie, and extricating themselves from the narrow outlet, endeavored to occupy the enemy's line, on the right and left of Ledlie, so as to cover those flanks respectively; but the men of the leading division, who should have pushed on, had spread out instead on either side, and occupied the vacated parts of the crater, so that the troops of the three divisions became intermingled, and confusion and disorganization at once ensued.

By this time, the enemy, recovering from the shock of the explosion, began forming his infantry in a ravine on the right, and planting artillery on both the right and left of the crater; and Meade sent urgent orders to Burnside to push his troops to the crest. Burnside seemed to appreciate the necessity for this action, but did not succeed in carrying out the order; doubtless because none of his division commanders were with their troops to lead and control them. At forty minutes past five, Meade learned that the troops were halting at the crater, and at once directed Burnside not only to urge his own men forward, but to call upon Ord to advance.

Potter was accordingly ordered to attack the crest of the ridge. He had been endeavoring to draw his men out of the crater, and form them for an attack on the right, to silence an artillery fire from that direction; but on receiving this order, he changed front in the presence of the enemy; then, under a heavy fire, and over all the obstacles of broken ground, his command advanced to within a few yards of the crest, but receiving no support, was driven back. Ord also attempted to advance,

but found the solitary point of egress from the national lines still blocked by Burnside's troops, and the wounded returning from the front assisting to choke the way. His orders, however, were repeated, and perceiving that the troops, even after debouching, only entered the crater and added to the confusion, he directed one of his divisions under Turner to charge to the right, climbing over the parapet. Turner obeyed, and dashed towards the enemy's trench in gallant style.

Meanwhile, Meade had become anxious at the lack of success, and at six o'clock, he sent the following despatch to Burnside: "Prisoners taken say there is no line on their rear, and that their men were falling back when ours advanced; that none of their troops have returned from the James. Our chance is now. Push your men forward at all hazards—white and black—and don't lose time in making formations, but rush for the crest." On the receipt of this order, Burnside threw in the colored division, which up to this time had not been engaged; but instead of pushing forward the troops at the head of his column, and—when they moved, advancing Ferrero,—he hurled the black division at once into the mass of troops already huddled in the crater, adding of course to the disorder there. Nevertheless, the negroes advanced up the slope, and with all the ignorant audacity of troops that have never been in an assault, they passed quite beyond the crater, and even attempted to take the hill, but were met by a counter-charge of the enemy; then breaking at once, they fled in great confusion to the rear, passing through Potter and Turner's divisions, and dragging many of the



white troops with them as far back as the national lines.

The remaining troops, although disorganized, yet behaved with great gallantry. Difficult manœuvres were executed more than once, brigades advanced, assaults of the rebels were repelled, all under a murderous and converging fire from the crest in front and the ravine and lines on the flanks; for the rebels had now brought up troops on every side, both artillery and infantry. A mortar fire was also opened, and shells were dropped into the gaping hole. The heat was intense, and there was no water; but no panic or general flight as yet occurred.

Burnside's despatches to Meade, reporting the fight, were meagre and unsatisfactory in the extreme; and Grant at last rode out to the national line, and there dismounting, walked across the front under a heavy fire, to a point where Burnside was watching the battle. He took in the situation at a glance, and perceiving that every chance of success was lost, at once exclaimed: "These troops must be immediately withdrawn. It is slaughter to leave them here." He then returned to Meade's head-quarters, and a written order to this effect was sent to Burnside. That commander, however, was still unwilling to retire, but the order was made peremptory. He next visited Meade, and stated that his men could not be brought out in safety, as the enemy's guns bore on the only line of retreat; whereupon he was permitted to withdraw them at his own time and in his own way. He received the second order to retire at fifteen minutes past nine, and it was twenty minutes past twelve before he sent it into the crater. While the

brigade commanders were preparing to obey, they were again attacked in force; and now the officers lost all command of their troops. A few men escaped, many were shot down, and more than two thousand were captured. By two o'clock all was over.

The entire loss in this affair was four thousand four hundred men. It was one of the most discreditable to the national arms that occurred during the war, though planned with consummate skill, and every contingency cared for in advance.\* With the enemy drawn in force to the north bank; the national troops brought rapidly back; the army of the Potomac and the Eighteenth corps massed in rear of the mine; artillery prepared to cover the approach; the mine itself a success;—there was every reason to anticipate a brilliant conclusion to the operation. “Such an opportunity of carrying fortifications,” said Grant, “I have never seen, and do not expect again to have.” But the failure to prepare the ground for assault was in itself sufficient to cause disaster; the abatis was left in front of the lines till the troops marched out, and only one narrow covered way led up to the debouche. Still, even after the delay at the beginning of the movement, if the assaulting column had been properly led, the crest of Cemetery hill might have been carried. It was more than thirty minutes after the explosion before the rebels recovered from their panic and returned to their lines, while Ledlie’s division reached the crater in half that time. But the fatal blunder was then committed of stopping midway in the charge to make or find shelter, to

\* See Grant’s orders, page 475.

dig up the enemy's guns, to succor the wounded. It was not that the advance was checked; the troops were not discouraged; the ground was clear before them; there was yet no serious resistance; they halted simply because they were not commanded to do otherwise. It was the absence and incapacity of the division general that occasioned the conduct of the men, and was in consequence the cause of the catastrophe.

Fault, however, must be found with higher officers than Ledlie. Burnside seems to have had no idea whatever what to do when he found that the troops did not proceed; he neither handled them with skill, nor was able to infuse any spirit into them, nor did he attempt to extricate them when the favorable moment was past. Indeed, long after all hope of victory was gone, and every one else saw plainly that in withdrawal lay the only chance of salvation, he still urged his superiors to allow the troops to remain. He did not even supply the proper information to Meade; his despatches were so few and insufficient, that a correct idea of the battle was not conveyed. Meade was not informed that the troops had halted in the charge, and did not know of this important circumstance, till nearly an hour after it had occurred. Had he been aware of it, other orders would doubtless have been issued, and much of the subsequent loss and suffering might have been avoided. Indeed, if Meade had been nearer the front, the entire result would probably have been different; but he had appointed his head-quarters in advance, and feared to leave them afterwards, lest greater confusion should follow from a change: he there-



fore never saw the field. Both Meade and Burnside lost their tempers, and an unseemly correspondence was carried on between them in the middle of the battle. Though the latter was chary of his reports, and failed more than once to reply to peremptory inquiries from his superior, he found time to send despatches which he himself afterwards described as inexcusable and insubordinate.\*

During the morning both Hancock and Warren were asked by Meade if they could support the movement of Burnside by attacks in their fronts, but both replied in the negative. Nevertheless, many, spectators and participants, believed, at the time and afterwards, that the lines before the Fifth and Second corps might have been easily carried, or, at any rate, that an advance on the right and left would have relieved the struggling mass of men at the centre, huddled together like sheep in a pen, and exposed like a mark to the concentric fire of the enemy. The corps commanders, however, were learned in their art; and not being at the front

\* It is perhaps proper to state that my criticisms of General Burnside are more severe than any I ever heard from General Grant. I make them because they seem to me necessary in order to complete the account of this engagement and to explain its failure. No one, however, more fully acknowledges or admires the unselfish patriotism of their subject and the lofty willingness which, even after this event, he displayed to subordinate his own interest to that of the army, and his own reputation to the success of his cause. Few men are capable of making the admissions I have noted which came from him; and notwithstanding General Grant's subsequent action, their personal relations continued as cordial as before. Despite his mistakes and his misfortunes, General Burnside's military career remains a credit to himself and his country, from the magnanimity and public virtue by which on so many occasions it was adorned.

himself, Meade could hardly do other than accept their judgments.

Grant blamed himself for allowing Ledlie to lead the assaulting column, but he had already countermanded one of Burnside's orders, and felt averse to dictating so minutely and disagreeably, in matters usually left to a corps commander. He attributed the disaster first of all to the incompetency of Ledlie; then to the neglect of Burnside to prepare the parapets and remove the obstructions during the night before the assault—which should have been done at every hazard; and lastly to the absence of the corps and division commanders from their troops. "I think," he said, "if I had been a corps commander, and had had that in charge, I would have been down there, and would have seen that it was done right; or if I had been the commander of the division that had to take the lead, I would have gone in with my division. We have a great many officers here who would have done the same thing. . . . I think the cause of the disaster was simply the leaving the passage of orders from one to another down to an inefficient man. I blame his seniors also for not seeing that he did his duty, all the way up to myself."\*

When asked if he thought that "the opportunity of success was lost owing to the confusion of the troops, in consequence of the inefficiency of that division commander;" he replied, "Yes. As I understand it, the troops marched right into the breach caused by the explosion, without there being a single division commander there.

\* Grant's testimony before Congressional Committee on Conduct of the War. 1865, Vol. I., page 111.

'They had no person to direct them to go further, although the division commanders were directed in the most positive terms to march to what is called Cemetery hill, which would have given us everything.'\* And when it was asked, if to gain the hill, it would not have been necessary to take possession of the enemy's batteries on the right and left of the crater; his reply was: "Not at all. If they had marched through to the crest of the ridge, they would then have taken everything in rear. I do not think there would have been any opposition at all to our troops, had that been done. I think we would have cut off entirely those of the enemy on the right, while those on the left would have tried to make their escape across the Appomattox."\*

In this last view Grant differed from several officers of rank, who thought that the troops should have moved out to the right and left, in order to prevent flank attacks, before advancing to the crest; but this was just the difference between his tactics and those of many of his subordinates, especially in the army of the Potomac. It was this difference which made Grant chief, and them subordinates; and it was not until his views prevailed and his methods were adopted that the army of the Potomac achieved its long-delayed but equally long-deserved success.

The anxiety to look out for the flanks, to consider what should be done on the right and the left; the elaborate reconnoitring and the cautious manœuvring at the moment when direct and instant advance was what alone could succeed—these peculiarities,—originating, perhaps, in the fact that so

\* Grant's testimony before Congressional Committee on Conduct of War. 1865, Vol. I., page 111.



many high officers of this army were engineers,\* or, it may be, in the spirit infused by its first commander; and, afterwards fostered by a long series of defeats, until neither troops nor commanders often expected victory—neutralized for a long while and to a great extent the undoubted talent and professional skill of men like Smith, and Warren, and perhaps Wright, and in a still less degree, Meade himself; and also neutralized the splendid courage and undaunted mettle of the men who composed the army. Meade, however, had less of this spirit than any of the others named, and certainly showed none of it on this occasion, unless in not positively directing that Hancock and Warren should support the charge.

If one should censure Grant more than he did himself—it would be because he was too careful of the feelings of his subordinates, and did not insist that his views should supplant theirs, and his methods at once prevail. He, however, had much to contend with. A Western man commanding Eastern troops; a line officer superseding engineers; a general fresh from repeated victories coming to an army as gallant as ever fought, but which had never yet accomplished a complete success—his task was far from easy; his instruments required the most careful handling. His subordinates were as patriotic, as earnest, as full of ability and knowledge as any soldiers in any war; but they were high-spirited, perhaps over-susceptible, and like military men everywhere, sometimes found offence where none

\* McClellan, Meade, W. F. Smith, Warren, Wright, and Halleck were all engineers. Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, Hancock, Schofield, belonged to the line.

was offered ; jealous, properly, of their own reputations, and of that of their commands ; wedded to their own ways, attached to their own school in war. Grant felt all this, though he made no parade of the feeling. But he felt also that the position of his officers as well as his own, was delicate, that their instincts were soldierly ; that their faults were those of their profession, and their excellences, in many instances, those of the men themselves.

His was besides a nature most averse to giving pain. No man was more long-suffering with his subordinates, none more anxious to avoid the assertion of his own superiority in rank or power. This day's events, however, helped to convince him that he must himself assume a position and perform a work which, from delicacy, he had thought to entrust to others. He must accept all the responsibilities that came to him, no matter how great or small, how painful or personal. On the 13th of August, Burnside was granted a leave of absence, and Parke was placed in command of the Ninth corps.\*

\* A military Court of Inquiry ordered by the President reported the causes of the failure to be :

1st. The injudicious formation of the troops in going forward, the movement being mainly by flank instead of extended front.

2nd. The halting of the troops in the crater, instead of going forward to the crest, when there was no fire of any consequence from the enemy.

3rd. No proper employment of engineer officers and working parties and of materials and tools for their use, in the Ninth corps.

4th. That some parts of the assaulting column were not properly led.

5th. The want of a competent common head at the scene of the assault, to direct affairs as occurrences should demand.

Nothing, however, disheartened Grant. Before the troops were withdrawn from the mine, he was planning another offensive movement. During the afternoon he said to Meade: "The enemy have not yet re-crossed the James. This will, therefore, be a favorable opportunity to send a corps of infantry and the cavalry to cut fifteen or twenty miles of the Weldon road. Instruct the cavalry to remain for this purpose, and either corps of infantry you may designate. . . . They should get off by daylight to-morrow morning, and strike the road as near Petersburg as they can, to commence work." Before night the exigencies on the Potomac compelled him to revoke this order, and send Sheridan to

"Had not failure ensued from the above causes, and the crest been gained, the success might have been jeopardized by the failure to have prepared in season proper and adequate debouches through the Ninth corps lines for troops, and especially for field artillery, as ordered by Major-General Meade." Generals Burnside, Ledlie and Ferrero, and Colonel Bliss, were severely censured by name, and General Wilcox more lightly.

A Congressional Committee investigated the same subject some months later, and found that the principal causes of the disaster were the failure to employ the colored troops in the advance!! and the fact that Burnside was not ordered, instead of pushing direct to the crest, to move to the right and left to protect the flanks. Hancock and Warren were censured for reporting that no advance should be made on their fronts; Meade also was rebuked very decidedly, and Grant by implication, for *interfering with Burnside's plans*. The failure to prepare the approaches was declared to have had no effect upon the result, and though the fact that no division commanders were present with their troops was mentioned, no opinion was offered as to its influence or importance. Thus this committee of civilians, who never in their lives had handled troops or heard a gun fired in anger, reversed, so far as they were able, the decision of the Court of Inquiry, and the judgments of every officer on the field, outside of the Ninth corps, including Hancock, Warren, Ord, Meade, and Grant.



Washington with two divisions of cavalry ; but it is worth noting that while the smoke of Burnside's battle was still lingering, the commander of the national armies had directed another attack on Lee's communications, and declared to his subordinates : " I cannot help feeling that if our cavalry should get well round the enemy's right, before our troops are withdrawn from their present position, we may yet take Petersburg."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Burning of Chambersburg by Early's orders—Flight of rebel raiders—Grant sends Sheridan to the Valley—Lincoln urges Grant to watch authorities at Washington—Grant visits Hunter—Hunter relieved by Sheridan—Sheridan's career in army of Potomac—Sheridan's characteristics—Creation of Middle Military Division—Condition of affairs when Sheridan assumed command—Grant returns to City Point—Hancock's movement to north side of the James—Grant's relations with Sherman—Recommends Halleck should be sent to California—Movements of Sheridan—Relations of various commands to each other—All the armies definitely controlled by Grant—Movement against Weldon road—Position of Fifth corps—Warren's success—Weldon railroad secured—Hancock withdrawn from north side of James—Concentration of rebels against Warren—Warren repels all attacks—Disastrous condition of rebels—Disingenuousness of Lee—Alarm of rebel government—Hancock sent to destroy railroad at Ream's station—Rebels attack Hancock—Battle at Ream's station—Retreat of Hancock—Rebels also retire—Weldon road remains in possession of Grant—Forces at Chattanooga in May, 1864—Manœuvres of Sherman—Retreat of Johnston—Fighting at Resaca—Further retreat of Johnston—Sherman seizes Cassville, Kingston, and Rome—Flanking movement against Dallas—Drawn battle at New Hope church—Sherman returns to railroad south of Allatoona—Unsuccessful attack on Kenesaw Mountain—Further flanking movements—Retreat of Johnston—Crossing of Chattahoochee river—Johnston relieved by Hood—Three separate attacks by Hood repulsed—Siege of Atlanta—Last flanking movement of campaign—Success of Sherman's strategy—Evacuation of Atlanta—Results of campaign—Personal relations of Grant and Sherman—Comprehensive character of Grant's strategy.

EARLY had reached Strasburg in his flight up the Valley before he learned that the pursuit by Wright was discontinued ; but on the 23rd of July,

he became aware that the bulk of the national forces had returned to Washington, and on the 24th, his army was in motion again for Winchester. Crook's column was all that now remained to obstruct the rebel advance, and at Kernstown, Early fell with his whole force on this command and drove it beyond Winchester. His cavalry, however, displayed no vigor, and the national loss was not severe; several hundred prisoners fell into Early's hands, and part of the wagon train, but none of the artillery was lost. On the 26th, the rebels advanced to Martinsburg, and on the 29th, McCausland was sent across the Potomac with a cavalry force, to burn the undefended town of Chambersburg, in Pennsylvania; while Early made a demonstration with the remainder of his command, between Williamsport and Hagerstown, to cover the movement. McCausland reached Chambersburg on the 30th, and finding no national force whatever to oppose him, he laid the town in ashes, rendering three thousand unarmed inhabitants homeless, and accomplishing no possible military object. General Early assumed the entire responsibility for this achievement, and none will dispute his right to all the reputation it confers.

The deed being done, McCausland at once retreated westward, but finding his advance checked by a national force under General Kelly, at Cumberland, he re-crossed the Potomac and moved south. Averill, however, was now in full pursuit, and on the 7th of August, came up with the rebel raiders, utterly routing the entire command; one brigade was surprised in camp, four cannon were captured, and several hundred prisoners taken.



The fragments of the force fled in great confusion half way up the Valley, not thinking themselves safe till they reached Mount Jackson, a hundred miles from Chambersburg.

The news that Early was again moving on Winchester reached City Point in the midst of the preparations for Hancock's movement and Burnside's assault. Six regiments of cavalry and the remainder of the Nineteenth corps were at once ordered to Washington, and Grant announced to Stanton: "I am commencing movements to-night from which I hope favorable results. They may have the effect of drawing the enemy back from Maryland." On the 30th, Burnside's disaster occurred, and, as already stated, before the troops resumed their former positions, Grant had ordered a movement against the Weldon road. "It is almost certain," he said to Meade, "that none of the enemy have re-crossed the James until since two P.M. to-day. . . . It is nearly as much to draw them back to this side as it is to cut the road that I want the expedition to go out. I am very much afraid Lee will send an army corps to reinforce Early." Later in the day he was informed that Lee was hurrying back to the south side of the James, and that Early was crossing the Potomac at the fords above Harper's Ferry. The expedition against the railroad was therefore countermanded, and an entire division of cavalry ordered to City Point, to embark at once for Washington.

But this was not all. Grant was now determined to put an end to these incursions into the loyal states, as well as to the blunders and mishaps

of the national forces at the North. The Valley of Virginia had an importance to the rebels beyond that arising from its strategical position, and one which was daily becoming more manifest. Notwithstanding the destruction that Hunter had effected in the early summer, its luxuriant harvests afforded the enemy, now often reduced to half rations in Richmond, a most abundant granary. "To obtain these stores and supplies," said Lee to Seddon, "was deemed an object of sufficient importance to warrant the attempt." In the intervals of fighting Early continually employed his troops in thrashing grain; and so great was his anxiety to secure the rich crops of the Valley that, while one portion of his command was engaged in battle, another close in rear was often grinding corn. It was the certainty of these supplies which rendered him independent of a commissariat, and made it possible to invade the North. The only way to terminate the situation was to seize the Valley and strip it of supplies; and this could only be accomplished by placing an energetic and competent commander at the head of all the troops on the Potomac and the Shenandoah.

Grant had advised such a course and applied for such a commander again and again; and on the 1st of August, without consulting any one, he relieved Sheridan from the personal command of the cavalry corps, and ordered him to Washington; telegraphing to Halleck: "I am sending General Sheridan for temporary duty whilst the army is being expelled from the border. Unless General Hunter is in the field in person, I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with

instructions to *put himself south of the enemy*, and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes, let our troops go also. Once started up the Valley, they ought to be followed till we get possession of the Virginia Central railroad." Sheridan left the army of the Potomac the same day, and on the 4th of August, a second division of cavalry followed him to Washington.

It was not enough, however, for Grant to issue orders, or even to send subordinates; his personal presence was at this time indispensable. Halleck at once suggested another disposition to be made of Sheridan; and on the 4th, the President himself telegraphed to Grant: "I have seen your despatch in which you say: 'I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy and follow him to the death; wherever the enemy goes, let our troops go also.' This I think is exactly right as to how our forces should move; but please look over the despatches you may have received from here since you made that order, and discover, if you can, that there is any idea in the head of any one here, of 'putting our army south of the enemy,' or of 'following him to the death' in any direction. I repeat to you *it will neither be done nor attempted, unless you watch it every day and hour, and force it.*—A. LINCOLN, President." Grant's reply was short, but to the point: "Your despatch of six P.M. just received. I will start in two hours for Washington, and will spend a day with the army under General Hunter."

He left City Point that night, and by evening of the next day, had arrived at Monocacy station, where Hunter's head-quarters were established, not



stopping at Washington on the way. Hunter's army he found encamped over the fields around, and a large accumulation of railroad trains at the station. His first question to Hunter was: "Where is the enemy?" But Hunter replied that he did not know; despatches were coming so rapidly from Washington, ordering him hither and thither in every direction to keep between the enemy and the capital, that he found it impossible to determine the position or movements of the rebels, much more to pursue them. Grant simply said: "I will find out where the enemy is;" and put the whole army—railroad trains and all—in motion that night for the Valley of Virginia. Before daybreak the advance was at Halltown, thirty miles from Monocacy, and four beyond Harper's Ferry. Grant knew very well that as soon as the rich storehouses of the Valley were threatened, the rebels would be in front of the national army to defend them.

At eight P.M., he wrote out Hunter's orders: "Concentrate all your available force without delay in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry, leaving only such railroad guards and garrisons for public property as may be necessary. . . . From Harper's Ferry, if it is found that the enemy has moved north of the Potomac in large force, push north, following him and attacking him wherever found; following him if driven south of the Potomac, as long as it is safe to do so. If it is ascertained that the enemy has but a small force north of the Potomac, then push south with the main force, detaching under a competent commander a sufficient force to look after the raiders and drive them to their homes. . . . In pushing up the Shenandoah Valley, where it is expected you will have to go

first or last, it is desirable that nothing should be left to invite the enemy to return. Take all provisions, forage, and stock wanted for the use of your command ; such as cannot be consumed, destroy. It is not desirable that the buildings should be destroyed ; they should rather be protected ; but the people should be informed that so long as an army can subsist among them, the recurrence of these raids must be expected, and we are determined to stop them at all hazards. Bear in mind the object is to drive the enemy south, and to do this you must keep him always in sight."

Grant read this letter of instructions to Hunter, and informed him that Sheridan was at Washington, but would be ordered at once to the front. He advised him to put Sheridan in command of the army in the field, establishing his own head-quarters where he chose, and retaining the general command of the Department. It was an awkward suggestion to make, for Sheridan was greatly the junior, but Hunter at once understood the situation, and with marked good sense expressed a willingness to be entirely relieved. Grant always dealt more gently with magnanimous subordinates, even if unsuccessful, than with more brilliant but selfish soldiers. He had not criticized Hunter severely, and on the 15th of July, had written to the War Department : "I am sorry to see such a disposition to condemn so brave an old soldier as General Hunter is known to be, without a hearing." But Hunter was old, and Grant always preferred young generals ; he had also long desired a spirited commander at the head of all the troops around Washington and in the Valley. So he promptly accepted Hunter's offer, and

telegraphed to Halleck to send Sheridan by the morning train to Monocacy. "Give him orders to take general command of all the troops in the field within the Division. General Hunter will turn over to him my letter of instructions." Sheridan arrived at Monocacy on the 6th, and Grant was at the station to meet him, with the orders originally written out for Hunter. The whole country around, which had been covered a few hours before with troops and army trains, was now entirely clear from any appearance of warlike preparation. After a short conference, in which Grant laid down his views on the situation and the course to be pursued, Sheridan started for his new command, and the general-in-chief set out for Washington.

It was just three months since the beginning of the Virginia campaign. During that period Sheridan had led the advance of the army into the Wilderness; had marked out its line of march to the North Anna, and fought and beaten the greatest cavalry leader of the South in sight of the works of Richmond; returning to the army of the Potomac, he had again led its advance to Hanover town, and afterwards to Cold Harbor, capturing and holding that important point; and had finally drawn off the rebel cavalry by the Trevillian raid, and thus materially assisted the successful march of the national army to the James river and Petersburg. He was almost the first commander on the national side to display the power of a large and well-managed body of horse. His idea at the outset was that infantry should fight infantry and cavalry fight cavalry; and he carried this principle into effect, immediately after the battle of the Wilderness. The result was



brilliant success, and in the end, the almost total annihilation of the rebel cavalry. He marched when and whither he pleased, was always the attacking party, and always gained an advantage. The enemy's numbers he believed to have been superior at the start, but the spirit of the national cavalry increased every day, while that of the rebels diminished. Grant, therefore, incurred no risk in removing two divisions to the Valley, for the cavalry force which had hitherto opposed them was no longer to be dreaded.

Sheridan was at this time thirty-three years of age. His short but compact frame looked able to do, or to endure all that was necessary in a soldier; his large and strikingly developed head and close-shorn locks, his ruddy face and black twinkling eye were full of character; while his expression, generally jovial, but quickly changing to stern determination or magnificent intensity—his simple, unaffected bearing, his genial address, and above all—a something in look, and gesture, and expression, that told you when he was in earnest—these gave him a magnetic influence over individuals and masses, which none but men of genius exercise, and which in a personal commander is invaluable. None ever fought under Sheridan, and few ever approached him, who failed to recognize this quality. He combined with clear judgment and broad comprehensive views, the profoundest feeling, and that instinctive sympathy with troops which knows just what they can do, and when, and inspires them by words and manner to do it. His plans were well-laid; he was cautious when caution was required; he knew what risks he took, and he knew when it was

wise not to take them ; he studied his chances, and he studied the field—for he possessed in a marked degree that topographical ability without which it is impossible to be a soldier\*—but above all, he was full of energy,—fearless, tireless energy. He rode about in battle with the most splendid daring and the most impetuous manner ; rising in his stirrups, brandishing his sword—a very paladin. His influence then over the men was supreme. If they halted in a charge, he ordered the music to the front, himself rode down the line, and the assault went on. If a wounded man stumbled, he called out to him : “ There’s no harm done ; ” and the trooper went on with a bullet in his brain till he dropped dead on the field.†

But Sheridan was more than a Murat ; he was not only fitted to inspire battalions and turn the tide of unsuccessful battle, but to plan campaigns of widest scope and complicated strategy. Hitherto, he had only commanded the cavalry corps, in independent movements, it is true, but with a limited force and under restricted orders. Grant, however, had watched him closely during the three months they had been together in Virginia, and believed that no one in his armies was better fitted for the important and critical position at the entrance of the Shenandoah. He was to protect the capital, to rebuff the audacious enemy who had alarmed the North, to seize and strip the

\* When he fell asleep at night, or in the afternoon (for soldiers must sleep whenever they can), it was generally with a map in his hand.

† This incident really occurred at the battle of Five Forks, and was described to me the same day, by General Horace Porter, of Grant’s staff, who witnessed it.

rich valley which that enemy so coveted; to "follow him to the death," to "keep him always in sight," to stop his incursions "at every hazard." This history will show to some extent how he performed the task.

On the 7th of August, the formal order was issued, creating the Middle Military Division, which comprised the Middle Department and the Departments of Washington, the Susquehannah, and West Virginia. The same day Grant telegraphed to Sheridan: "Do not hesitate to give commands to officers in whom you repose confidence, without regard to claims of others on account of rank. . .

What we want is prompt and active movements after the enemy, in accordance with the instructions you already have. I feel every confidence that you will do the very best, and will leave you, as far as possible, to act on your own judgment, and not embarrass you with orders and instructions." It has already been seen how Grant inspired the subordinates whom he really trusted by letting them know the fulness of his confidence; and Sheridan was one of those in whom that confidence was never disappointed nor disturbed.

But while entrusting so much to this younger and newer lieutenant, the general-in-chief was at the same time encouraging and supporting him who had been a comrade and coadjutor for years. Before leaving Washington he telegraphed to Sherman, who had been explaining some delay: "Your progress, instead of appearing slow, has received the universal commendation of all loyal citizens, as well as of the President, the War Department, and all persons whose commendation you would care for.



... I came from Monocacy yesterday afternoon, after having put our forces in motion after the enemy, and after having put Sheridan in command, who I know will push the enemy to the death. I will telegraph you in future more frequently than heretofore." With such relations between the chief and his great captains, success was invited, if not secured.\*

When Sheridan was sent to the Valley, the

\* I cannot resist the temptation to quote Sherman's reply in full; it so admirably illustrates and corroborates what I have tried to tell of the accord of his instincts with Grant's, the prescience of his genius, the fidelity of his friendship, and the earnest outspoken eloquence which was always at his command: "I was gratified to learn you were satisfied with my progress. Get the War Department to send us recruits daily, for *we can teach them more war in our camp in one day than they can get at a rendezvous in a month.* Also tell the President that he must not make the least concession in the matter of his September draft. It is right, and popular with the army, *and the army is worth considering.* I am glad you have given General Sheridan the command of the forces to defend Washington; *he will worry Early to death.* Let us give these Southern gentlemen all the fighting they want, and *when they are tired, we will tell them we are just warming to the work.* Any sign of a let up on our part is sure to be falsely construed, and for this reason I always remind them that the siege of Troy lasted six years, and Atlanta is a more valuable town than Troy. We must manifest the character of dogged courage and perseverance of our race.

"Don't stay in Washington longer than is necessary to give impulse to events, and get out of it. It is the centre of intrigue. I would like to have Mower made Major-General: he is a real fighter."

Grant replied on the 9th: "I will ask to have all western recruits sent immediately to you. Your views about showing no despondency, but keeping the enemy with his last man now in the field constantly employed, are the same I have often expressed. We must win, if *not defeated at home.*"

army of the Shenandoah consisted of the Sixth corps, under Wright; one division of the Nineteenth corps, under Emory; two small divisions of infantry, commanded by Crook; and Averill's cavalry. To these were speedily added another division of the Nineteenth corps and the two divisions of cavalry already ordered from the James; Sheridan was then at the head of about twenty-two thousand infantry and seven or eight thousand horse.\* Early's force, not very far inferior, covered the entrance to the Valley, now so rich in grain, cattle, sheep, hogs, and fruit; and his troops were not only billeted on the inhabitants, but actually harvesting the crops to supply both themselves and the army defending Richmond. Hunter's position at Monocacy and Frederick had left all of western Maryland and southern Pennsylvania open to the enemy; but the advance to Halltown at once, as Grant foresaw, obliged Early to concentrate his command, and assume a defensive attitude.

The general-in-chief remained one day at Washington, discussing with the government the situation of affairs, and on the 8th, returned to City Point, to make a diversion in favor of Sheridan. But during his absence, Lee had dispatched Anderson, with Kershaw's division of infantry and Fitz-Lee's cavalry, to Culpeper, to co-operate with Early, doubtless hoping to create the impression that an entire rebel corps had been moved towards the Valley. It was indeed some days before the national commanders could definitely ascertain what force had gone from Richmond. On the 9th, Grant said to Sheridan: "I shall endeavor to hold them, and rather create a

\* See Appendix to Chapter XXV., Vol. III.

tendency to draw from you than allow them to reinforce." On the 12th, he informed Halleck that two divisions of infantry and a large body of cavalry had gone to Early, and directed him to notify Sheridan: "He must be cautious, and act now on the defensive until movements here force them to detach to send this way." Those movements were not long delayed: the same day orders were issued for another demonstration north of the James. "I am determined," said Grant, "to see if we cannot force the enemy to return here, or give us an advantage."

The new operation closely resembled the preceding one of the 26th of July. The Second corps was again temporarily detached from Meade's command, and Butler was ordered to reduce the force holding his lines to the minimum, and send whatever troops he could spare to aid the expedition. "I think," said Grant, "one infantry man to six feet the greatest abundance at Bermuda, and one to four feet sufficient for the line south of the Appomattox." Butler was always efficient in these emergencies, and—unlike most commanders—ready to strip himself for the sake of operations in which he did not share; and he now promptly directed Birney with nine thousand men from the Tenth corps to report to Hancock. Gregg's division of cavalry was also placed under Hancock's orders for the movement.

On the afternoon of the 12th of August, the Second corps marched to City Point, and on the 13th, was embarked on steamers, to give the impression that the troops were destined for Washington; while the artillery was sent to Bermuda Hundred after



dark. Butler was directed to relay the pontoon bridge at Deep Bottom during the night of the 13th; and as soon as this was done, the cavalry and artillery began the crossing, Birney following from Bermuda Hundred. The Second corps was to reach Deep Bottom by two A.M. on the 14th, and to disembark by daylight. The orders to Hancock of two weeks before were now repeated, and Grant added: "You will have to be guided in your movements by those of the enemy, and his numbers. If you do not succeed in placing the enemy between your infantry and the James river, it may not be safe to send the cavalry to the Virginia Central railroad. Of this matter you can best judge. There is no necessity for holding your connection with Deep Bottom. With the force at your command, you will always be able to get back to that point, or some other on the James river."

But although desiring and directing his subordinates to take advantage of every opportunity, Grant did not anticipate from the demonstration north of the James any conspicuous result in that immediate vicinity. The object of the movement was to call back reinforcements from Early, and to entice as many rebels as possible from the defences of Petersburg. On the 13th, he said to Meade: "If the enemy are reduced as much in numbers as we have reason to believe they are, Hancock's movements to-morrow may lead to almost the entire abandonment of Petersburg. Have this watched as closely as you can, and if you find this view realized, take such advantage of it as you deem best. Either move to the left with such troops as you can take from the Ninth and Tenth corps, leaving but a very

thin line, or draw out the Fifth corps entire to move with, according to your judgment."

At an early hour on the 14th, the cavalry crossed the bridge and marched out at once from Deep Bottom, to cover the infantry. Hancock, however, found a difficulty in debarking the Second corps. The tide was running out, and the transports could not approach the shore as close as had been expected ; and notwithstanding every exertion, it was nine o'clock before the troops were landed. Mott then proceeded with little opposition to Bailey's creek, but found the enemy, as in July, entrenched in a very strong position. Barlow had been ordered to move to the right of Mott and assault the rebel line ; if successful, he was then to turn to the left and uncover Mott's front. But his attack was incoherent : the command had been recently recruited ; many of the men were raw, and even the officers inexperienced ; and although Barlow was zealous and skilful, he was unable to use his material to advantage : his main assault was not made until late in the afternoon, and when this failed, night put an end to further operations. As Barlow's movement had no success, Mott's front remained uncovered, and that officer made no attempt to advance. Birney, meanwhile, on the other side of Bailey's creek, had met with better fortune. The rebels weakened their line in his front to such an extent, in order to resist the advance of Barlow, that Birney was able to seize a portion of their works, capturing four guns, with trifling loss.

But although the day ended without any brilliant tactical success, Grant had already attained important strategical results. One division of Long-

street's corps, under marching orders for the Valley, was known to have been detained; and towards evening a large body of rebel troops was reported moving from Petersburg to the north side of the James. Sheridan had been aided, and the chance of success in case of an attack on the left, by Meade, was decidedly improved. But more important than all was the information acquired in regard to the enemy's movements. At eight P.M. Grant telegraphed to Sheridan: "We captured six pieces of artillery, and prisoners from four different brigades of Field's division, Longstreet's corps. This is a division I had supposed gone to the Valley. It is now positive that Kershaw's division has gone, but no other infantry has. This reinforcement to Early will put him nearer on an equality with you in numbers than I want to see, and will make it necessary for you to observe more caution about attacking. I would not, however, change my instructions further than to enjoin caution." Thus the movements of the new commander in the Valley depended on information obtained in a battle on the James; for the armies of the Potomac and the Shenandoah were pieces moved by the same player in one great game.

But there were other and still more distant parts of the field which also the chief was obliged constantly to study, and the conditions of which he must, if possible, control. Sherman was now close upon Atlanta, and had asked repeatedly for reinforcements. On the 9th of August, Grant said to him: "I will ask to have all western recruits sent immediately to you." On the 10th, he said to Halleck: "We must try and get ten thousand reinforcements to Sher-



man by some means. . . . I should like to hear of a thousand a day going." On the 13th, Sherman telegraphed : " I would like to be assured that no material reinforcements have come here from Virginia ;" and in the midst of the operations at Deep Bottom, Grant replied : " No division or brigade has gone from here, west, and I shall endeavor to keep the enemy so busy that none will go. . . . The great danger you have to apprehend is from Kirby Smith getting his men across the Mississippi." To Halleck he said, on the same day : " If E. K. Smith succeeds in crossing his troops to the east side of the Mississippi, as he evidently is trying to do, Canby can spare a large force to operate against Mobile. Instruct him to put as large a force there as he can. He must be able to spare five to eight thousand colored troops to go to Mobile." There seemed absolutely no movement of the enemy, however threatening in character or formidable in dimensions, which did not immediately suggest to Grant a distinctly aggressive operation in return. Because Early was reinforced in front of Sheridan, Hancock attacked Lee : because Kirby Smith seemed likely to advance against Sherman, Canby was to be reinforced before Mobile.

But besides ordering Sheridan and Meade, now hundreds of miles apart, to co-operate with Hancock on the James ; besides directing the armies along the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico so as to facilitate the advance of Sherman into Georgia—Grant found time, within the same twenty-four hours, to consider the condition of the Pacific coast, and telegraph to Stanton his views in regard to commanders in California and Oregon. " At this particular time it

is of great importance that we should have on the Pacific coast not only good military commanders, but men who will give satisfaction to the people. From what I learn unofficially, we lack this. . . . *I am in favor of Halleck for that department.* He is acquainted with the people, and can combine civil with military administration, which is required in that department."

Halleck had just written to Grant in most alarming terms that a combination was forming in several Northern states to resist the draft. "The draft must be enforced," he said, "for otherwise the army cannot be kept up; but to enforce it may require the withdrawal of a very considerable number of troops from the field. This possible, and I think very probable exigency must be provided for. I call your attention to it now, in order that you may be prepared for it, and make your arrangements accordingly. . . . Are not the appearances such that *we ought to take in sail, and prepare the ship for a storm?*" To this, on the 15th, Grant replied: "If there is any danger of an uprising in the North to meet the draft, or for any other purpose, our loyal governors ought to organize the militia at once, to resist it. If we are to draw troops from the field to keep the loyal states in harness, it will prove difficult to suppress the rebellion in the disloyal states. My withdrawal now from the James would ensure the defeat of Sherman." And, instead of "taking in sail," he continued: "Twenty thousand men sent to him at this time would destroy the greater part of Hood's army." It was on the day of this despatch that Grant proposed to Stanton to send Halleck to California.

Meantime the operations on the James went on. During the night of the 14th of August, Hancock transferred the greater part of Birney's command to the right of Barlow, directing Birney to find the enemy's left and either attempt to turn it, or assault. The 15th, however, was consumed in reconnoitering and manœuvring, and no attack was made. At 6.40 P.M. Birney sent word that he had found the enemy's line, but that the country was unfavorable for a night assault. On the 16th, Gregg moved forward the cavalry on the extreme right, and during the day advanced and withdrew, with chequered success. Birney also made an assault in his front, but no important advantage was obtained. This day Grant ordered a fleet of transports to the neighborhood of Deep Bottom, to induce the rebels to suppose that Hancock was retiring, and bring them out to attack. But Lee was too wary to be tempted from his entrenchments, and the ruse did not succeed. A part of Hill's command, however, was drawn to Hancock's front, from the south side of the Appomattox, and learning this, Grant at once directed Meade: "If the enemy reduce again to three divisions at Petersburg, it will be advisable to move Warren on to the Weldon road at least, and further, if it should prove advisable."

At night he thus summed up the day's proceedings, for the government: "The fighting north of the river to-day has resulted favorably for us, so far as it has gone; but there has been no decisive result. The enemy have been driven back somewhat from their position of this morning, with considerable loss in killed and wounded, and about four hundred prisoners left in our hands. . . . I



have relieved the Fifth corps from the trenches, and have it ready to march around Petersburg, if the enemy can be induced to throw troops enough north of the James to justify it."

This day, important news arrived from Sheridan. He had moved on the 10th, against Early, who at once fell back before him, and Sheridan pursued for several days. On the 13th, the rebels had reached Strasburg, and Sheridan encamped on the heights north of the town, along Cedar creek. At this point he received Grant's despatch of the 12th, announcing that two divisions of infantry, besides a large force of cavalry and twenty pieces of artillery, had gone from Richmond to Early. The officer who brought the news had ridden in great haste from Washington, through Snicker's gap, escorted by a regiment of cavalry. He arrived just in time: Sheridan was making his preparations for an attack. "It did not appear," he said, "that there was more than their rear-guard, and twelve pieces of artillery;" but the approach of so large a rebel reinforcement at once changed the situation. Sheridan himself was now thrown on the defensive. "As far as I have been able to see," he said to Grant, "there is not a military position in this Valley, south of the Potomac. The position here is a very bad one, as I cannot cover the numerous roads that lead in on both of my flanks to the rear. I am not aware that you knew where my command was, when you ordered me to take up the defensive. I should like very much to have your advice." Grant replied: "I would not advise an attack on Early in an entrenched position, but would watch him closely with the cavalry, and if he attempts to move north, follow him."

Thus, at three vital points—in the Valley of Virginia, before Atlanta, and in front of Richmond, a critical moment had arrived; and Grant, with his great lieutenants, was charged with the fate of the nation, before which they now stood prominent; he, calm and measured, but unceasing in effort, comprehensive in design, and immutable in resolve; they, full of fiery but regulated vehemence, of magnificent, purposed audacity. His own simile of the balky team was no longer appropriate; it was rather the ancient chariot of war, trampling down armies, driving around cities, marching across continents; the steeds full of spirit and endurance, but responsive to every pressure of the rein; sometimes held in, sometimes let out; now fast, now slow, but always in hand; and charioteer and all—instinct with one spirit, moving with one will, aiming at one goal.

It was at this juncture, while these triple movements were in preparation or in progress, that Grant recommended Sherman, Sheridan, and Hancock for promotion. On the 10th of August, he wrote to Stanton: "I think it but just reward for services already rendered, that General Sherman be now appointed a major-general, and W. S. Hancock and Sheridan, brigadiers in the regular army. All these officers have proven their worthiness for this advancement." Sherman and Hancock were promoted on the following day, and went into battle wearing the honors they had so richly earned.

On the 17th of August, Grant telegraphed to Sheridan: "Our movement north of the James river has exercised the enemy a great deal, and from statements of prisoners, he has lost very heavily. It has, too, undoubtedly prevented send-

ing reinforcements to the Valley. Richmond is now threatened by no mean force on the north, and Petersburg by a larger force on the south." Lee had indeed been greatly disturbed by the recent strategy, and on this day again transferred a great portion of his command to the north bank of the James. "This," said Grant, "leaves the force at Petersburg reduced to what it was when the mine was sprung;" and Warren was accordingly ordered to move at once against the Weldon road.

During the first weeks of August, the Fifth corps had held the left of the national line, covering the Jerusalem plank road; Parke had the centre, and Hancock the right, of Meade's army; while Ord, on the right of Hancock, reached to the Appomattox river. But when, on the 12th of August, the Second corps was moved again to Deep Bottom, Ord had been placed under Meade's command, and directed to extend to the left, so as to occupy a part of the line previously held by the Ninth corps; Parke was then to hold from Ord's left as far as the Jerusalem road; while the Fifth corps was withdrawn altogether, and kept in readiness for further operations.

At four A.M., on the 18th, Warren moved, accompanied by a brigade of cavalry from Kautz's command. He was to effect a lodgment on the railroad, advance as close as possible to the enemy's works, and take advantage of any weakness he might discover in the rebel lines. This, Grant thought, might lead to a withdrawal of troops from Hancock's front, and he accordingly telegraphed to that commander: "Watch closely, and take advantage of anything you can." Butler also was informed of the movement, and instructed: "If



this should lead to a withdrawal from your front, be prepared to throw all your force at Bermuda into the breach, and I will recall everything from north of the James, to reinforce." Thus, every position on the line was watched, and every commander ordered to be on the alert. To Sheridan Grant said: "It is highly probable that the constant vigilance I shall compel the enemy to keep up will force him to recall a large portion of Early's force. Watch closely, and be prepared to move at any moment. If you find Early sending off any of his troops, strike suddenly, and hard."

Warren at first met with slight opposition, and reached the railroad by ten o'clock. Griffin's division was then posted to cover the approaches from the south and west, while Ayres proceeded northward, along the railroad. Pushing forward about a mile, the advance soon came upon the enemy, in line of battle with artillery, evidently prepared to dispute a further progress. Crawford's division was at once ordered up on the right to out-flank the position; but at two p.m., before this was accomplished, the rebels advanced against Ayres, who at first was obliged to fall back, to prevent his own left from being turned. He contested the ground, however, with vigor, and finally in his turn drove the enemy. Crawford also received a portion of this attack, and a brigade of the Fourth division was sent to the support of Ayres. The fight for a while was severe, but the rebels were definitely repelled, and Crawford continued his movement on the right until dark. Warren lost nine hundred and thirty-six men, in killed, wounded, and missing; but the rebels suffered still more severely,

leaving their dead and some of their wounded on the field. At seven p.m. Warren reported: "I have got my line as close to the enemy as I can, and made arrangements for entrenching. . . My right is in sight of the main entrenchments of Petersburg." The Weldon road was carried. Grant had remained at City Point, to be near both Hancock and Butler, and as soon as the result on the left was known, he telegraphed to Meade: "Tell Warren, if the enemy comes out and attacks him in the morning, not to hesitate about taking every man he has to repel it, and *not to stop when the enemy is repulsed*, but follow him up to the last. *We certainly ought to be satisfied, when we can get the enemy to attack us.*"

During the day Meade had applied for the return of the Second corps, but Grant was obliged to consider the exigencies of Sheridan as well as those on the James. "I am anxious," he said, "to force the enemy to withdraw from the Valley the reinforcements he has sent to Early; and think the best way to do it is to threaten as long a line as possible. . . Hancock, by detaining a large force north of the James, makes our force at Petersburg relatively as strong as if he were with it." The north side also seemed to be "a sensitive point with the enemy;" and whatever the rebels for any reason particularly desired to guard, Grant always thought it worth his while to threaten, if not assail. Towards evening, however, when notified of the battle on the left, he at once instructed Meade to transfer a portion of the Ninth corps to the support of Warren, and supplied their place by Mott's division, withdrawn from Hancock after dark. No man knew, better

than Grant, that the whole aspect of a campaign may change in an hour, and that fixity of purpose then, unless combined with flexibility of means, may entail irreparable ruin.

The rebels were by this time greatly alarmed at the interruption to their supplies which Warren's lodgment on the Weldon road would render inevitable. It was of vital importance to them to drive him off; and although perplexed and distressed by Hancock's movement, Lee was compelled to subtract part of his forces north of the James and mass them in front of Warren. Grant, however, was on the alert, and early on the 19th, announced to Hancock: "The enemy are moving troops to Petersburg. . . If you can find an opportunity to attack any weak point, do not hesitate to do so. I think it will be perfectly safe for you to leave any portion of your line guarded merely with pickets, whilst all the balance of the force is being used as an assaulting column."

The position of the Fifth corps was now about three miles west of the main national line; and at four A.M. on the 19th, Warren sent out a brigade to establish a connection between his own right and the pickets of the Ninth corps, on the Jerusalem plank road. This order was not executed as he desired, but a line was taken up a mile in rear of the position indicated, and a gap thus left between Warren and Parke. Before Warren had time to rectify the mistake, the rebels discovered it, and breaking through the interval with a heavy force, in columns of fours, they faced to the national left, and swept rapidly down in rear of Crawford's line, towards Ayres. At the same time an advance



was made against Ayres on the railroad. Two regiments of Crawford's line were taken completely in rear, and much confusion was created, as the skirmishers fell back, masking the fire of those behind ; finally, all of Crawford's line and the right of Ayres's division were obliged to give way, with a heavy loss in prisoners. Crawford was at one time quite surrounded. But at this juncture, the two divisions of the Ninth corps, which had been ordered to the support of Warren, came up, and were at once put into line ; Crawford and Ayres were re-formed, the enemy in his turn was driven back, the fresh troops on the right pressing the rebels hard ; the former ground was regained, and the enemy withdrew in haste and confusion to his entrenchments ; carrying with him, however, the prisoners made in the original attack on Crawford's rear. Meanwhile, repeated onsets had been made on Ayres, but all repelled. Warren's losses were heavy, but the position on the railroad was maintained.

As soon as the good news reached Grant, he telegraphed to Meade : " I am pleased to see the promptness with which General Warren attacked the enemy when he came out. I hope he will not hesitate in such cases to abandon his lines and take every man to fight a battle, and trust to regaining them afterwards, or to getting better." Later, he said : " The enemy have evidently taken everything from their line, and think of no attack except to dislodge our troops from the railroad. . . Can you not spare Mott's division from the line to reinforce Warren ? . . I will bring Hancock back to-morrow." That night he instructed Hancock :

“I want now principally to have the enemy so occupied that he cannot send off any of his forces, and attacks made only where he leaves a weak place, or where he can be surprised.”

Nothing of importance occurred on Hancock's front, and on the 20th, orders were given for the withdrawal of the Tenth and Second corps. At the same time Grant said to Butler: “When this change is made, it will probably induce the enemy to strengthen his weak point in your front, before we can take advantage of it. If you can get through, however, I should like it very much;” and to Hancock: “If anything through the day should give you an advantage where you are, this order will not be observed.” He could not too forcibly impress on his subordinates his extreme anxiety to seize the unexpected opportunities which battle so constantly presents to those who are alive to them. His own plans were invariably made with this reference; and no one principle did he more incessantly reiterate to those who fought under him. To meet attack with counter-attack elsewhere, to strip his defensive lines to the minimum, when he formed an assaulting column; to take chances, as well as to make them, and to follow up every advantage to the utmost—these were the secrets of his own success, and the maxims which he inculcated, sometimes in vain, on his generals; but the application of which he was invariably quick to recognize and applaud.

On the 20th, the rebels were engaged in bringing back a large part of their force from the north side, and made no attack on the Fifth corps. Grant had hoped that Warren himself would assume the offen-



sive, but that officer spent the day in posting his troops favorably for artillery defence, in order to secure a larger infantry reserve. At nine P.M. Grant said to Sheridan : " Warren's corps is now entrenched across the Weldon road. I shall endeavor to stay there, and employ the enemy so actively that he cannot detach further." Ord was now ordered to extend his line as far as possible to the left, so as to relieve a larger portion of the army of the Potomac, and Butler was directed to send batteries from Bermuda Hundred, to increase the artillery strength of the Eighteenth corps at those points where the infantry force was diminished. In the night the Second corps withdrew from Deep Bottom, followed by the Tenth corps and the cavalry.

During the last three days Hancock had acted almost as completely on the defensive as the enemy ; but Grant found no fault with him for this, as no great opportunity for aggressive action had occurred. The movement north of the James was meant to be co-operative ; to keep the enemy from sending reinforcements either to Sherman or Sheridan, and if possible, to draw troops from the south side of the river. All this had been fully accomplished ; Hancock not only detained a division which had been under marching orders for the Valley, but so threatened the northern approaches to Richmond, that Lee had removed more than half his army to the front of the Tenth and Second corps. It was thus made possible to throw Warren out to the left and seize the rebel communications there. The strategy of July was repeated, this time with happier results ; for Warren had not only gained a splendid prize, but held it splendidly until rein-



forcements enabled him to make what he had won secure. Then, first, a single division of the Second corps, and finally, Hancock's whole command was withdrawn from the north side, and the attention and effort of the army were turned to the left flank. This night Grant said to Halleck: "The enemy are now so extended that they are forced to keep every man on the watch, and from accounts of prisoners are running their men to death, shipping them from one place to another."

But Lee was unwilling to definitely abandon the Weldon road without another effort to retrieve so great a loss. At nine A.M. on the 21st, the rebels drove in Warren's pickets on the north and west, and opened a heavy cross fire of artillery. At ten o'clock this was followed up by an assault all along the left front and flank of the Fifth corps. Warren's artillery, however, did such execution that the rebel formations were broken, in some places, before they came within good musketry range. The national infantry at once advanced, and the enemy was repulsed with loss. One rebel brigade, striking a part of the line where the national troops were in echelon, found itself almost surrounded, and several hundred were taken prisoner. The attempt to outflank the left was thus completely frustrated; and Warren remained in possession of the coveted ground.

He had, however, made no advance in return. The report of his artillery reached City Point, and the general-in-chief at once inquired: "Is the firing now heard, on Warren's front? If so, the enemy should be opened upon by the Ninth and Eighteenth corps." Later, he telegraphed: "It is hard to say

what ought to be done without being on the field, but it seems to me that when the enemy comes out of his works and attacks and is repulsed, he ought to be followed vigorously to the last minute, with every gun. *Holding a line is of no importance whilst our troops are operating in front of it.*" Still later, he said: "If the enemy are moving to turn Warren's left, why can he not move out and attack between them and Petersburg, and either cut their force in two, or get in rear of it?" When Warren and Meade complained of the roads, he answered: "If roads are impassable for our artillery, it must be so for the enemy."

It had now become apparent that the rebels were concentrating almost their entire strength on the national left. This opened a possible opportunity on the right, to Grant; and accordingly, at one P.M., he telegraphed to Butler: "The enemy is undoubtedly massing everything he can, to drive us from the Weldon road. To do this, he is undoubtedly leaving his entrenched lines almost to their own care." The Tenth corps, after covering the departure of Hancock from Deep Bottom, had just arrived at Butler's front, and Grant continued: "Have a reconnoissance made, and if, with the Tenth corps, you can break through, do it." At the same time he said to Ord: "The enemy evidently intend to use nearly their entire force to drive us from the Weldon road. This will enable us either to penetrate their line, or to hold ours with a small force. Either make an attempt to break through on your front, or extend so as to relieve Mott's division to go to Warren. I incline to think the latter the best policy, but leave it to

your judgment." When Grant had a commander in whom he confided, he never failed to qualify his own orders by the judgment of the officer on the spot. Nothing is more notable in his despatches than this constant reference to contingencies of which he could not himself be cognizant in advance. Compelled for the most part, by the extent of his lines and the configuration of the ground, to remain in person at one central point,—with his right wing ten, or sometimes twenty miles away, and separated from him by the James; his centre, under Butler, on the further side of the Appomattox; and his left now stretching out beyond the Weldon road—his most positive instructions left always something to the immediate discretion of his subordinates: the execution, and the manner, and the means might all be varied. The tenor, and scope, and aim, however, remained; and these were always aggressive, persistent, bold. But no opportunity, at this juncture, appeared on the right or centre, and the rebels made no further attempt to molest the commander of the Fifth corps.

Lee had at first attempted to conceal the extent of his disaster. His despatches for several days represented that he had repelled the advance of Warren. On the 18th, he telegraphed to Seddon: "The enemy in front of Petersburg moved his Fifth corps *towards* the Weldon railroad, where he was met by General Heth, who drove him a mile, capturing one hundred and fifty prisoners." He suppressed all mention of the fact that the rebels were eventually driven back, and that Warren had absolutely seized the railroad. On the 20th, he telegraphed again: "General Hill attacked the



enemy's Fifth corps yesterday afternoon at Davis house, three miles from Petersburg, on Weldon railroad, defeated and captured about twenty-seven hundred, including one brigadier and several field officers. Loss on our side believed to be smaller than that of the enemy." In this despatch not only is the number of captures over-stated, but there is no allusion whatever to the final repulse of Hill, and his total failure to regain the position on the railroad.

The fact is that Lee was often disingenuous in his reports. He did not absolutely falsify, but he colored and concealed, so as to convey a very incorrect impression, and sometimes one entirely different from that on which he acted. He was very much given to sending off a despatch in the early part of an engagement, if his own troops had the advantage; but when they were afterwards driven back, or still more disastrously handled, he often neglected to state the conclusion of the affair.\* No one reading his reports of the battles for the Weldon road would imagine that the rebels were repeatedly repelled, and finally suffered a rebuff which Lee and his government very well knew might lead to the evacuation of Richmond.

But these despatches announcing success were printed in the Richmond newspapers, while on the 22nd, Lee wrote to his government in far different language—never intended to be given to the world: "I have the honor to inform you that the enemy's superiority of numbers has enabled him to effect a lodgment on the Weldon

\* See pages 208 and 270.

railroad. Two attacks were made upon him when he first approached the road, in both of which he was worsted, but the smallness of the attacking force prevented it from dislodging him. By the time reinforcements could be brought from the north of James river, the enemy had so much strengthened his position that it was found impracticable to drive him away when the attack was renewed yesterday. . . . If driven from the place he now occupies, he could not be prevented from striking the road at some other point, as our forces are insufficient to guard its entire length. These considerations induced me to abandon the further prosecution of the effort to dislodge the enemy, as it could not be done without a greater sacrifice of life than we can afford to make, and the benefits secured would be only temporary. . . Under these circumstances, we should use every effort to maintain ourselves by our remaining line of communications."

The condition to which the rebels were reduced by this last disaster was indeed pitiable. In the same communication, Lee declared: "Our supply of corn is exhausted to-day, and I am informed that the small reserve in Richmond is consumed." He urged accordingly the most strenuous efforts on his government to procure supplies, and the strictest economy when these should be obtained. "Corn should be brought into Wilmington, if practicable, until the new crop becomes available; the southern roads should be made to bring as much as the Danville road and its connections can bring to Richmond; the purchase and collection of all stores required by the army should be everywhere vigor-

ously prosecuted." He promised that his army should haul stores from Stony Creek around the break in the railroad, and manifested a determination under these most alarming circumstances which it is impossible not to admire.

The Richmond government also in this emergency was full of spirit and resolution. Seddon acknowledged the consequences certain to follow the permanent lodgment Grant had effected on the Weldon road, "diminishing the conduits of supply, and increasing the facilities of attack on our only remaining southern line—the Danville road. Every effort must be made to defend and maintain that road; and the Department will enjoin enhanced vigilance on the officers charged with that duty. We may be subjected to serious embarrassments in procuring supplies, but I entertain sanguine confidence that we shall not be compelled to evacuate your positions for want of subsistence for men or animals. . . *Of corn, I regret to say, there is literally none, until the new crop comes in; and the scarcity of it, with the prospects of a bad crop, diminishes largely the quantity of wheat which can be spared from the wants of the people.*"

An entry, for July 23rd, in a diary of the period, reads: "The prices fixed by commissioners on impressments for the next two months are *five times those hitherto paid*. The whole country cries shame, and a revision must be made, else the country will be ruined."

During all these operations on both sides of the James the weather had been extremely hot, and the fatigues of the troops were consequently enhanced.



Numerous cases of sunstroke occurred on the march, especially in Warren's command. The rain fell in torrents, the woods were dense, the condition of the roads was wretched, the ground swampy, the atmosphere dank and oppressive. Hancock's men, exhausted by the long night march from Deep Bottom, had hardly time to cook their breakfasts on the 21st, before they were in motion again for Warren's battle-field. They arrived at three in the afternoon, but the fighting for that position was ended.

On the 22nd, Warren was occupied in fortifying his ground, and Barlow's division of the Second corps, together with Gregg's cavalry, was set to destroying the railroad southwards. On the 23rd, Barlow occupied Ream's station, about seven miles south of Warren's position, and Gibbon's division joined him on the 24th. The work of destruction was carried on with vigor to a point three miles south of Ream's, and nearly to Rowanty Creek. Meanwhile the cavalry had several severe skirmishes still further towards the south and west.

On the 25th, the rebels appeared in force on the west, and Hancock at once called in his working parties, and concentrated his command at Ream's. A line of breastworks had already been constructed at this point, and although he considered it faulty, there was no option but to use it. Word was also sent to Meade of the rebel approach. At noon the pickets of the First division gave way; and at two o'clock, the rebels made a spirited advance against Miles, temporarily in command of Barlow's division, on the right of Hancock's line. This attack was repelled, but a second and more vigorous one fol-

lowed at a short interval, which also was repulsed, some of the enemy falling within a few yards of the national breastworks.

At this juncture Hancock received a despatch from Meade, announcing that Mott's division was moving to his support, but that the enemy was assuming the offensive, and would probably either attack the Second corps, or interpose between it and Warren. Under these circumstances Meade suggested that Hancock should cease the work of destroying the railroad, and resume his old position on the left and in rear of Warren. Hancock, however, felt that, closely engaged as he was, he could not withdraw with safety. "Everything," he said, "looks promising at present, except that being in an enclosed position, the enemy are liable to pass between myself and Warren." As soon as Meade was informed of the critical position of affairs, he ordered Wilcox's division of the Ninth corps to Hancock's support. "I hope," he said, "you will be able to give the enemy a good thrashing. All I apprehend is his being able to interpose between you and Warren. You must look out for this." Wilcox, however, was ordered to march by the plank road, a more circuitous route than the railroad, and at 4.15 p.m. Hancock sent word to Meade: "I fear it will be too late to have Wilcox get here for any practicable purpose. . . Had the division come down the railroad, it would have been here in time."

Meanwhile, the rebels were preparing their forces for a final attack, and at about five o'clock they opened a heavy artillery fire, which, owing to the faulty position of the rifle-pits, took a portion of the

command in reverse, and had a demoralizing effect. The shelling lasted about fifteen minutes, and was followed by an assault on Miles's front. The rebels were met by a severe fire of musketry, and at first were disordered by the obstacles to their advance; but at the critical moment, a part of Miles's line gave way in confusion, and a gap was created. A brigade was at once ordered forward to fill the gap, but the men could neither be made to advance, nor to fire. A battery of artillery was then turned on the opening, and did great execution; but the enemy advanced along the rifle-pits and took possession of the battery, turning one of the guns against the national line. Another brigade, on the left of the break, at this moment gave way, and a second battery fell into the hands of the enemy; not, however, until it had lost a large proportion of men, officers, and horses; for it was served with distinguished gallantry.

Gibbon's division, on the left of Miles, was immediately ordered to retake the captured position and guns, but his troops responded feebly, the men falling back to their breastworks, after receiving only a slight fire from the enemy. By the loss of this position, Gibbon was exposed to an attack in reverse and on the flank, and his troops were obliged to occupy the reverse side of the breastworks they had themselves constructed. Affairs were now in a critical condition, and but for the obstinate gallantry of Miles and a part of his command, the disaster would have been greater still. Miles's behavior was superb. He succeeded in rallying a small portion of the Sixty-first New York regiment, and forming a line at right angles



with the breastworks, swept off the enemy, recapturing one battery, and retaking a considerable portion of the line: he then threw about two hundred men towards the rebel rear, but the force was too small to accomplish anything. Many of his other troops behaved very badly, running away without firing more than one or two shots, and their commanders were quite unable to bring them again to the front.

The enemy's dismounted cavalry now made an attack on the left, driving Gibbon's division from its breastworks; the command offered very little resistance, though the attack was feeble; and the rebels, elated at their easy success, were pressing on with loud cheers, when they were met by a heavy flank fire from the dismounted national cavalry, occupying the extreme left of the line, and their advance was summarily checked. Gregg here did invaluable service, and the steadiness of his cavalry put many of the infantry to shame. The rebels, however, soon turned their attention in that direction, and Gregg was unable to hold his position, after Gibbon had fallen back. A new line was then formed in the rear of the rifle-pits, and this, with the assistance of Miles, was held until dark, and the rebels were checked in every attempt to advance beyond that part of the line they had already carried. Miles and Gregg now offered to retake their breastworks entire, but Gibbon stated that his division could not retake any part of his line. The troops were accordingly ordered to withdraw, Miles covering the rear.

Wilcox had by this time arrived at a point about a mile and a half in rear of the field, and after the

troops of the Second corps had passed, his division acted for a while as rear-guard. Hancock went into camp about midnight, near his old position, Gregg holding the plank road, and the country thence to Warren; while Wilcox returned to his camp. The rebels made no attempt to follow; but before day-break, retreated to Petersburg, leaving their dead and wounded on the field. The battle for Ream's station was over.

Hancock attributed his disaster chiefly to the bad behavior of his troops, and declared that had they acted with their usual gallantry, he should have beaten the enemy. His men were greatly fatigued by the marches and labors of the previous fortnight; besides which, many of them were raw, the term of service of large numbers of troops having recently expired. The officers also were often inexperienced; the chasms made by death, wounds, disease, and expiration of service had been filled by novices; and the Second corps was no longer what it once had been. Hancock's entire force on this occasion consisted of six thousand arms-bearing men, infantry, and about two thousand cavalry. The enemy's strength cannot be positively stated: but prisoners were taken from three separate divisions, and Hampton's cavalry was present in large force. Hancock lost two thousand one hundred and fifty-three men—in killed, wounded, and missing: Lee reported his gains, but, as usual, was careful not to state his loss. The rebels left the ground at the same time with Hancock, and the only result of the battle was the killing and capturing of so many of the Second corps. Warren's position was not disturbed.

This terminated the efforts of the enemy to dis-

lodge the national forces from the Weldon road, and Grant was very well satisfied with the results of the fortnight. The losses sustained by the rebels north and south of the James were such as they could ill afford; while the two principal objects of the movement had been absolutely accomplished: Lee had been prevented from reinforcing either Hood or Early, and the great southern line of communication with the rebel capital was finally severed. On the 26th, Grant telegraphed to Sheridan: "I now think it likely that all troops will be ordered back from the Valley, except what they believe to be the minimum to detain you. . . Yielding up the Weldon road seems to be a blow to the enemy he cannot stand. . . Give the enemy no rest."

But this was not all. While Grant and Sheridan were absorbing the rebel attention at the East, Sherman had been left undisturbed to execute a brilliant feat west of the Alleghanies: one that he had suggested and Grant approved a month before.\* Finding it impossible entirely to invest Atlanta, he first secured his communications across the Chattahoochee river, and then moved his army by the right flank, against the railroads in the rear of the town, in order to draw the rebels out of their fortifications. In this he entirely succeeded; and after defeating Hood at three separate points, he forced him to retire still further south, and on the 2nd of September, the national forces occupied Atlanta, the principal railroad centre in Georgia, and the strategical object of the campaign.

When Sherman started from Chattanooga, his command consisted of eighty-eight thousand infantry,

\* See page 544.



six thousand cavalry, and four thousand three hundred artillerymen; in all, ninety-eight thousand soldiers: Thomas, McPherson, and Schofield were his principal commanders. The army in his front, under Joseph E. Johnston, numbered in May, sixty thousand effective men,\* and the destruction of that army was the ultimate object of Sherman, assigned by Grant. Atlanta, the point protected by Johnston, is at the junction of the railroads to Augusta, Macon, Savannah, and Mobile. The distance from Chattanooga is a hundred and forty miles, and the country between, densely wooded, mountainous, broken by ravines, and crossed by numerous and rapid streams, is full of difficulties for an advancing army. There is but one railway till Atlanta is reached, and the ordinary roads, wretched at the best, in rainy weather become almost impassable.

On the morning of the 6th of May, Sherman's forces were grouped about twenty miles out from Chattanooga—Thomas at the centre, at Ringgold, McPherson on the right, at Gordon's Mills, and Schofield on the left, at Red Clay. The enemy lay in and about Dalton, eighteen miles further south, covered by an almost inaccessible ridge, known as Rocky Face. Through this ridge the only route was by a narrow pass called Buzzard's Roost, obstructed by abatis, flooded by water, and commanded by batteries crowning the cliffs on either side. To strike the position in front was impracticable, and towards the

\* Johnston reported his present for duty on the 1st of May, as 43,887; his aggregate present, 63,807. A letter from his Adjutant-General, published in Johnston's "Military Narrative," states that he was reinforced before the 26th of May, by 27,000 effective men. See Appendix for remarks on Johnston's numbers.

north the enemy had erected a strong line of works, so that Sherman speedily resolved to turn the rebel left. On this side, a good practicable road leads through the mountains to Resaca, a point on the railway in Johnston's rear, eighteen miles south of Dalton.

Thomas was accordingly ordered to make a strong feint in front, and Schofield to press down from the left, while McPherson was dispatched by Snake Creek Gap to attack Resaca and the railroad. This it was hoped would compel the rebels to evacuate Dalton, and McPherson was ordered to stand ready to strike them in flank, as they retreated southward. Thomas and Schofield made a vigorous demonstration, and McPherson pushed easily through Snake Creek Gap, but thought Resaca too strong to be carried by assault. Sherman thereupon transferred both Thomas and Schofield to the support of McPherson, leaving only one corps, under Howard, in front of Dalton. Thus threatened on his only line of communication, Johnston fell back on the 13th, to Resaca, and having the shorter road, he reached that point before the national army, like Lee in his race with Grant through the Wilderness. When Sherman came up in front of Resaca, he found the rebels in force and strongly fortified.

Howard followed hard on Johnston's heels, and Sherman promptly repeated the manœuvre which had already compelled the abandonment of Dalton. While pressing with great part of his force in front of Resaca, he dispatched one division of troops to threaten Calhoun, seven miles in Johnston's rear, and another with orders to cross the Oostenaula river, and break the railroad between Calhoun and

Kingston. On the 15th, heavy fighting occurred before Resaca, without any decisive tactical result, but that night Johnston learned that his communications were in danger, and retreated across the Oostenaula, burning the railroad bridge in his rear. Sherman entered Resaca at daybreak, and his whole army at once started in pursuit of the enemy. No serious opposition was encountered until the 19th, when Johnston was discovered at Cassville, twenty-five miles from Resaca, admirably posted on a ridge, with a broad open valley in his front. Dispositions were made on both sides for battle, but as the national forces converged, the rebels again fell back, and in the night retreated across the Etowa river, burning the bridges as they passed. Sherman now made a halt of several days at Cassville and Kingston, to rest his troops and bring up supplies. In the meantime he took possession of Rome, about twenty miles west of Kingston, with its valuable mills and foundries, and a number of guns of heavy calibre.

The Allatoona mountain was the next obstacle in the national front, and the Allatoona pass, in which Johnston had taken post, was almost impregnable. Sherman did not attempt to take it by force, but in order to turn the position, decided to make a wide circuit to the south by way of Dallas, and strike the railroad again at Marietta, not only below the Allatoona pass, but south of Kenesaw mountain. This movement would compel him to leave the railroad altogether, and depend for possibly twenty days on the contents of the wagons; but Sherman's experience, first under Grant in the Vicksburg campaign, and afterwards in his own Meridian raid, had made



him venturesome. On the 23rd of May, his columns were all in motion for Dallas, by different roads; but Johnston at once detected the movement, and prepared to meet it. On the 25th, Sherman came upon the rebels in force at a point called New Hope church, where the roads from Ackworth, Marietta, and Dallas meet. A hard battle was fought, but Johnston remained established on the Marietta road, between Sherman and the railroad. The enemy at once entrenched, and Sherman concentrated his force. There was constant fighting for several days; the forests were dense, the ground was difficult, and the opposition serious; and Sherman at last determined to work gradually to the left, and push for the railroad, between Allatoona and Kenesaw. On the 28th, the rebels made a bold assault near Dallas, but were signally repulsed; and on the 4th of June, the movement to the left had been effected; all the roads leading to the Allatoona pass were occupied, and the pass was turned. Sherman made no further attempt to drive the enemy from New Hope church, but moved at once to Ackworth; and as he withdrew, the rebels also abandoned their lines, and fell back to meet him on the railroad. With the drawn battle of New Hope church, and the occupation of the natural fortress of Allatoona, terminated the month of May, and the first stage of the campaign.

At Ackworth, Sherman was joined by two fresh divisions, under Blair, amounting to nine thousand men. This force, with the new regiments and furloughed men, about equalled the loss the army had sustained since the 1st of May.

The advance was now in front of the famous Kenesaw range, and on the 10th of June, the bold

and striking twin-mountain came in sight, with the links of a continuous chain prominent behind. On each sharp, conical peak the enemy had his signal-stations; the summits were crowned with batteries, and the lines of parapets stretched out ten miles long. Johnston had chosen his ground well, and prepared for battle with deliberation and skill. His position gave him a perfect view of Sherman's operations, and the national general was obliged to proceed with caution. He thought Johnston's line too long, and determined to break it between Kenesaw and Pine mountains; but as he pushed forward on the 15th, Pine mountain was abandoned. He advanced again, and on the 17th, Lost mountain, as well as the long line of breast-works connecting it with Kenesaw, was also yielded by the enemy. Sherman continued to press at all points, skirmishing in dense forests and across the most difficult ravines, until he came upon the rebels strongly posted and entrenched, with Kenesaw as their salient, their lines now greatly contracted, but covering Marietta and all the roads below. The weather was bad, the rain fell almost continuously for three weeks, the narrow, wooded roads became mere valleys of mud, but the men worked daily closer and closer to the enemy, keeping up an incessant and galling picket fire. At last the rebel shot and shell passed harmlessly over their heads, they lay so close to the enemy's mountain tower. On the 22nd, Johnston sallied out and attacked the national line, but received a bloody repulse, like that at Dallas a month before.

Sherman was now convinced that it was necessary for him to assault. All the success of the

campaign thus far had been achieved by out-flanking, and he felt that, for the moral effect on his men, he must once at least adopt a different course. Accordingly, on the 27th of June, he made two separate assaults. The attacking columns fought their way up the face of the mountain, under a furious fire of musketry and artillery. At one or two points they reached the parapets, and held their ground within a few yards of the rebel trenches; but Johnston's line was nowhere broken. The assault began at nine, and before noon it had definitely failed, but the foremost national dead lay against the enemy's breastworks. Sherman lost nearly three thousand men, and inflicted a loss of only eight hundred on the enemy, who remained behind his well-constructed lines.

But not long did the national army rest under the influence of failure. On the 1st of July, McPherson was ordered to withdraw from the front of Kenesaw, and move rapidly to the right, in order to threaten Turner's ferry across the Chattahoochee river, in Johnston's rear. The effect was instantaneous. McPherson moved in the night of the 2nd, and Kenesaw was abandoned before morning. With the first dawn of day the national skirmishers appeared on the mountain-top: the army followed, and Sherman himself entered Marietta by half-past eight. He had hoped to strike the rebels in flank and rear, in the confusion of crossing the Chattahoochee, but Johnston had foreseen the emergency, and prepared in advance a strong fortification, five or six miles long, to cover the bridge. Behind this he was safely ensconced, when the national troops arrived. But the rebels were driven to cover, in



the valley of the Chattahoochee, and on the 5th of July, Sherman held the northern bank for nearly thirty miles, above and below the tête de pont. He was now on high ground, and overlooked the enemy in his turn. The houses in Atlanta, nine miles distant, could be seen, and the hostile camps and wagon trains between.

But the rebels had not yet passed the river in force, and Sherman resolved to employ again his now familiar tactics—entrenching a part of his command in Johnston's front, while with the remainder he prepared to cross the Chattahoochee, and threaten the rebel army and Atlanta itself in rear. On the 9th of July, three points of passage were secured east of Atlanta, with good roads leading to the town; but that night Johnston abandoned his trenches, burning the railroad bridge, and at daylight Sherman was undisputed master of all on the northern side.

It was a week, however, before the national army crossed. Once on the southern bank, Sherman must accept battle whenever offered, with the Chattahoochee in his rear, a deep and rapid stream—its bridges burned, and few and difficult fords; he was more than a hundred miles from his base, and a bitterly hostile country intervened. It behoved him to take all prudential measures. But on the 17th, he moved his army by the left flank, and crossing the river without opposition, took post astride of the Augusta railroad, the shortest line between Atlanta and the Atlantic coast. The next day he learned that Johnston had been relieved by Hood, a bolder but far less skilful general. The change betokened the displeasure of

the rebel government with Johnston's cautious but clever policy, and Sherman prepared for audacious sallies and desperate fighting on the part of his new antagonist.

He had not long to wait. On the 20th, the national forces were converging westward upon Atlanta, but a gap existed between Schofield, who had the centre, and Thomas on his right. At four in the afternoon the enemy came out from his works in force, penetrating this interval, and fell in line of battle upon the right centre of Sherman's army—Thomas's command. The blow was sudden and unexpected, but the national troops fought well, and after a severe battle, drove the enemy back to his entrenchments, with heavy loss.

On the 21st, the enemy's front reached from the Augusta road, on the rebel right, to the Chattahoochee river, on the left, at a general distance from Atlanta of four miles. On the morning of the 22nd, Sherman found this position abandoned. His own ranks at once swept up, closing in around the town, till they occupied a line in the general form of a circle, with a radius of about two miles. Here the enemy was found again, holding in force a line of finished redoubts which had been prepared for more than a year. These covered all the roads leading into Atlanta, and were connected by curtains, and strengthened by rifle-trench, abatis, and chevaux-de-frise. On this day, McPherson had the left, and about noon he was attacked in great force. An entire corps had sallied from Atlanta, and making a wide circuit to the east, struck his left flank, enveloped it, and then swung around to the rear. While riding to an exposed

portion of his line, McPherson was killed, and Logan succeeded temporarily to his command. Orders were rapidly given to hold the ground, troops were hurried to the endangered flank, and for four hours the battle was desperate—the men fighting first on one side and then on the other, of their parapets. At last a lull occurred; but after this a second rebel assault was made, and at first the national line gave way; reinforcements, however, came up, and the ground that had been lost was all regained. The enemy finally withdrew, leaving his dead and wounded in Sherman's hands, and more than a thousand prisoners.

About this time Sherman was informed by Grant that the rebel government was becoming anxious in regard to Atlanta, and that it was possible Hood might be reinforced. He therefore prepared to execute a plan he had long revolved. The Augusta railroad was now torn up for thirty miles, and the Chattanooga road of course was in his hands; the only other railroad leaving Atlanta runs south for about twelve miles, and then, at East Point, divides into two great branches, one leading to Macon and the Atlantic coast, the other to West Point and the Gulf of Mexico. Sherman's idea was to extend his lines to the right until he struck the road above East Point, and thus cut off the last communications of the rebel army.

McPherson had been succeeded by Howard in permanent command, though both Logan and Blair were senior, but Sherman had his preference, and Grant refused to interfere. On the 25th of July, Howard had the left, Schofield the centre, and Thomas the right of the national line, which was



now about five miles long, reaching from the Augusta road on the left, to Proctor's creek and the Chattahoochee river on the right. The two cavalry divisions, under McCook and Stoneman, were in the rear. Sherman first ordered Howard to vacate his line, and withdraw by the right to Proctor's creek, while Schofield extended his left to the Augusta road. Howard was then to move rapidly and boldly against East Point, and the cavalry was sent by the right and left, to make a lodgment on the Macon road, near Jonesboro'.

On the 27th, the movement began ; but shortly before noon on the 28th, as Howard was marching to his new position, the rebels came out and attacked his right flank, doubtless expecting to strike it in air. The assaulting columns made a spirited advance, but were resisted valiantly, and in spite of all the efforts of their officers, the rebel ranks broke and fled. Six times they were rallied, but in vain ; and at four o'clock the assault was over, and the enemy fell back into Atlanta.

This terminated all attempts to check by force the extension of Sherman, but as fast as his lines reached out to the south, the rebels met him with rapidly and well-constructed forts and rifle-pits, between the national front and the railroad. During the month of August his operations assumed the character of a siege. His right even yet did not extend to the point desired, and he was forced to shift first Schofield, and then a portion of Thomas's command to that flank, and finally the army was drawn out from the Augusta road on the left to the Sandtown road on the right, a distance of full ten measured miles. The skirmishers were now held close to the

enemy, and, covered by logs or rifle-trench, kept up a continuous fire of musketry. The main lines, further back and adapted to the shape of the ground, were strongly entrenched, and the muskets kept constantly loaded and stacked, ready for use ; the field batteries were in select positions, covered by handsome parapets ; and heavy guns, brought up from Chattanooga, did good execution against the town. The bridge across the Chattahoochee had been reconstructed, and the railroad came up to the rear of the national camps, where trains arrived daily from Nashville and the North. The weather was intensely hot, and the month one of incessant conflict, though without great battles.

On the 7th of August, Sherman telegraphed : " We keep hammering away all the time, and there is no peace inside or outside of Atlanta. . . I do not deem it prudent to extend any more to the right, but will push forward daily, by parallels, and make the inside of Atlanta too hot to be endured. . . I am too impatient for a siege, and don't know but this is as good a place to fight it out on as farther inland. One thing is certain, whether we get inside of Atlanta or not, it will be a used-up community when we are done with it." At this time he learned that both his cavalry expeditions had failed. Stoneman was captured with nearly a third of his command, and McCook, after some success at the start, found himself surrounded, and with difficulty fought his way back to Marietta.

Meanwhile the enemy was stubborn, and Hood seemed determined to hold his forts, even if Atlanta was destroyed ; Sherman at last became satisfied that, to reach the Macon road and control the sup-

plies for Atlanta, he would be obliged to raise the siege and move with all his army. On the 10th of August, he said to Grant: "Since July 28th, Hood has not attempted to meet us outside of his parapets. In order to possess and destroy effectually his communications, I may have to leave a corps at the railroad bridge, well entrenched, and cut loose with the balance to make a circle of desolation around Atlanta." Grant replied: "The movement you propose is a little hazardous, but I believe it will succeed. If you do not force the enemy out to fight, you will easily get back to your base." Both soldiers were in favor of the boldest course.

But at this juncture, Hood sent off his entire cavalry force to make a raid in the national rear, breaking the railroad at several points, and then moving towards East Tennessee. Grant at once telegraphed: "I never would advise your going backward, even if your roads are cut so as to preclude the possibility of receiving supplies from the North; but would recommend the accumulation of ordnance stores and supplies while you can, and if it comes to the worst, move south as you suggested." Sherman replied with his usual spirit: "I never will take a step backwards, and have no fears of Hood. I can whip him outside of his trenches, and think in time I can compel him to come out." In fact, the movement of Hood left Sherman superior in cavalry, and he at once sent off five thousand horse, under Kilpatrick, to break the railroads in the rebel rear, hoping thus to avoid the necessity of moving his main army. But Kilpatrick returned on the 22nd, having accomplished little of importance, and Sherman reverted to his original plan.



On the night of the 25th of August, the army moved. Slocum's corps was left at the Chatahoochee bridge, and the remainder, sixty thousand strong, was drawn out of the lines, and thrown as far to the south and west as Sandtown. Then turning east, on the 28th, Sherman struck the West Point road at Fairburn and Red Oaks, and one day was devoted to destroying the railroad. The ties were burned for twelve and a half miles, the rails heated and twisted, and the cuts were filled with trunks of trees, rock, brush, and earth, intermingled with loaded shells. On the 29th, the whole army moved eastward by different roads, Schofield on the left and Thomas at the centre, while Howard had the right, or outer part of the circle. On the night of the 30th, Howard was within half a mile of Jonesboro', on the Macon road, twenty miles south of Atlanta. This brought the rebel army rapidly to his front, and on the 31st, Hardee attacked him with parts of two corps, and fought for several hours; but Howard was entrenched, and held his own, and the enemy finally withdrew, leaving four hundred dead on the field.

Meanwhile Schofield and Thomas had each struck the Macon road north of Jonesboro', and Sherman at once ordered them both to the support of Howard. He expected the whole army to close up on Jonesboro' by noon of September 1st, so that the rebels might be surrounded; but only one corps arrived before dark, and the enemy was able to make his escape, retreating southward. About two hours after midnight the sounds of heavy explosions were heard in the direction of Atlanta, with a succession of minor shocks, and what seemed like the rapid

firing of cannon and musketry. This was the blowing up of Hood's ammunition trains. On the morning of the 2nd, finding the enemy gone from his front at Jonesboro', Sherman ordered a general pursuit south, and overtook the rebels at Lovejoy's, twelve miles further, in a strong entrenched position, with their flanks well protected by streams. Rumors now arrived that Atlanta was abandoned, and Sherman ordered the work of destroying the railroad to cease, and the troops to be held in hand for any movement that might become necessary. Before night the fact was officially announced that the rebels had evacuated Atlanta. Slocum entered on the 2nd of September. Sherman at once abandoned the pursuit of Hood, and turned his columns northward. On the 8th, his army was encamped in the rebel stronghold.

It was four months since the national hosts moved out under the shadow of Lookout mountain against Johnston's army. During that period they had marched four hundred miles, fought thirteen distinct battles, and captured thirteen thousand prisoners; they had made seven successful flanking movements; crossed the Oostenaula, the Etowa, and the Chattahoochee rivers; turned three mountain ranges, and captured fourteen towns. Sherman had entered the campaign with ninety-eight thousand troops, and received reinforcements which brought his numbers up to one hundred and thirteen thousand. At the end his army was eighty-one thousand strong. He had lost four thousand four hundred killed, twenty-two thousand eight hundred wounded, and four thousand four hundred missing: total, thirty-one thousand six hundred men. In the

rebel army the losses were three thousand killed, eighteen thousand nine hundred wounded, and twelve thousand nine hundred prisoners; in all, thirty-four thousand eight hundred soldiers.\*

The strategy of the campaign had been almost one continuous success. The flanking movements at Dalton and Resaca were conceived with a clearness and executed with a precision not often rivalled, and were all the more creditable because performed in the presence of a master in the art of war. At Dalton the rebel position was such that a front attack must have been a failure, and the interior lines of Johnston, together with the rough roads that Sherman had to traverse, made it almost certain that the enemy would reach Resaca first. Sherman, however, always maintained that McPherson might have seized that point before the arrival of the rebels, and thus obliged them either to assume the offensive or to abandon the railroad by which alone they could be supplied.

When the army moved from Kingston, Sherman hoped not only to avoid Allatoona, but Kenesaw, but the rebel strategy at this point was admirable.

\* The statement of Johnston's losses in killed and wounded is taken from a summary compiled since the war by Surgeon Foard, medical director of Johnston's army. This summary is published in Johnston's "Military Narrative," and purports to furnish exact copies of the reports made to Johnston and Hood during the progress of the campaign; but it is not on file in the rebel "Archive Office," is in no way official, and there is no warrant for its correctness except the "opinion" of Surgeon Foard. It is probably not unfavorable to the rebels, as it leaves entirely out of the calculation three divisions of cavalry. The rebel losses in prisoners were officially reported to Sherman at the time, as given in the text.



The national object was divined, and Sherman returned to the railroad sooner than he had intended or desired. But Allatoona was turned, and the complete success of the manœuvre was only delayed.

The assaults at Kenesaw have been sharply criticized, but even remembering their immediate result, it must be owned that they produced good fruit. They demonstrated to Johnston that his opponent was not destitute of boldness, and they proved the mettle of the men, who gained and held ground so close to the enemy's parapets that he dared not show a head above them. There can be no doubt that occasions arise when an unsuccessful assault is preferable to a strategic manœuvre made to avoid a battle; and certainly Sherman's army moved on with no less spirit after the attack on Kenesaw, while the instant withdrawal of the rebels, when Marietta was threatened, showed no increased readiness to fight, on the part of the enemy.

It is impossible not to perceive the parallel between these alternate attacks and flanking movements and those in the Wilderness campaign. At East and West, the national generals pursued an aggressive policy in a difficult region, with forests to penetrate, breastworks to carry, and rivers to cross. At East and West, a skilful opponent took every means to compensate by position, superior knowledge of the country, and all defensive arts, for an inferiority in numbers not half so marked in either instance as has been declared. In Georgia as in Virginia, the progress was slow but steady; neither commander ever lost an inch of ground, and after every battle each national army advanced. Sherman's strategy was, however, more uniformly that

of manœuvring, than Grant's; he fought but one offensive battle during the campaign, though his movements were invariably aggressive: yet Grant as often as Sherman compelled the rebels to abandon their positions by pure strategy. Sherman was oftener attacked than Grant: Johnston once assaulted with vigor, and when Hood assumed command, the offensive-defensive policy was fairly attempted.

The operations nearer Atlanta also resemble those immediately in front of Richmond. In each campaign there was a great river to cross, before arriving at the town, although the Chattahoochee is not to be compared for difficulty with the James, and when once passed, it ceased to interpose between the different portions of the attacking army. In each campaign there were several railroads to seize; in each the national commander slowly but steadily reached out after the line most jealously guarded by the enemy. In each the rebel general extended his front as fast as the assailant; in each the operations at last became almost those of a siege, while in neither was the investment absolutely made complete. In each campaign it was the army rather than the town which was the objective point of the national army.

The fighting was harder at the East, the battles bloodier, and longer, and oftener; for both sides felt that at the East the issue must after all be decided. Richmond was a political as well as a military strategic point, and the insurgent government naturally concentrated a greater force, and made a more desperate effort for their capital. At the East it was indispensable that the armies of the

rebels should be—not only depleted, exhausted, beaten, driven from their stronghold—but destroyed. Sherman's campaign, however, as well as Grant's, tended to this end. It not only annihilated the railroad communications of the enemy at the West ; not only penetrated to the heart of the Confederacy, consuming its products and intercepting its supplies ; but most important of all—the capture of Atlanta released Sherman to co-operate more absolutely and closely with Grant.

Sherman, indeed, always felt that he too was fighting against Richmond. He appreciated thoroughly the necessity for co-operation and concentration, and in every step he took regarded its effect upon the general scheme. He considered that he bore his part in a game in which there were many players, and he gave help and expected it in his turn. He kept constantly in mind his relations not only with the general-in-chief, but with all the commanders in the field, and his despatches abound with references to the operations of Banks, Canby, A. J. Smith, and even Farragut, as well as to those immediately under the eye of Grant. As early as the 8th of April, he wrote to Banks : “ I hope by the time you turn against Mobile, our forces will again act towards the same end, though from distant points. General Grant now having lawful control will doubtless see that . . all the armies act on a common plan ; ” and in August, when he started against East Point, he said : “ I should like the utmost activity kept up in Mobile bay, and if possible about the mouth of Appalachicola ; also to be assured that no material reinforcements have come here from Virginia.” On the 27th of June, he



was considering Grant: "I can press Johnston, and keep him from reinforcing Lee;" on the 25th of August, he asked the same assistance in return: "If you can keep away reinforcements, all well." At one time he said: "General Grant's letter of April 4th from Washington formed the basis of all the campaigns of the year;" at another he wrote to Grant himself: "I knew, wherever I was, that you thought of me."

But though his movements were a part, and a most significant one, of operations which extended over a continent, the campaign at the West was Sherman's own. Grant gave him his army and his aim, but allowed him to follow Johnston in his own fashion, only requiring him to expect no reinforcements from Eastern troops, and to prevent the Western rebels from reinforcing Lee. Sherman, indeed, reported his operations daily, and Grant often advised him, but only to encourage and approve, not to countermand. He allowed his own movements to be affected by Sherman's needs, and planned campaigns and fought battles to occupy rebel forces which might otherwise be sent or ordered to Georgia; but during the four months in which Sherman was making his way to Atlanta, Grant never once interfered with his general plan or with any particular movement; and this, although Sherman's subordination was such as almost to invite a superior to interpose.

But what their relations were at the beginning, they continued to the close. Grant was as considerate and unselfish, as anxious for Sherman's fame when his great lieutenant had stepped up into the ranks of the world's captains, as when his friend

had been called crazy two years before ; and none could be quicker to acknowledge and proclaim a success which for a time, in the eyes of many, eclipsed his own ; for Sherman seemed first to gain his prize, though none knew better than he, that his work was still incomplete when Atlanta fell.\*

Sherman, on the other hand, grew in power, and greatness, and fame. He was more conscious of his own ability after he had handled a hundred thousand men in independent movements during an entire summer ; he had learned what success was, and relished it ; he could not be unconscious of the far different position he now held before the country : but he was as ready to submit his judgment to that of his chief, as quick to obey an order, even if he did not approve it, as thoroughly subordinate, as when he rallied a broken division at Shiloh, or led a corps with all the energy of his nature in what he deemed a hopeless campaign behind the Vicksburg hills.

Grant received the news of the fall of Atlanta on the 4th of September, and telegraphed at once to Sherman : " In honor of your great victory I have ordered a salute to be fired with shotted guns from every battery bearing upon the enemy. The salute will be fired within an hour amid great rejoicing." Sherman replied : " I have received your despatch, and will communicate it to the troops, in general orders. . . I have always felt that you would personally take more pleasure in my success than in your own, and I reciprocate the feeling in its fullest

\* " Neither Atlanta, nor Augusta, nor Savannah was the objective, but the army of Jos. Johnston, go where it might."  
—*Sherman's Memoirs*, Vol. II., page 26.

extent." On the 12th, Grant wrote again : " I feel you have accomplished the most gigantic undertaking given to any general in this war, and with a skill and ability that will be acknowledged in history as unsurpassed, if not unequalled. It gives me as much pleasure to record this in your favor as it would in favor of any living man, myself included." These were no idle words. Both men meant what they said.

Grant, however, could very well afford to be magnanimous, for Sherman's success was itself a vindication of his strategy. If Lee had not been depleted and stunned in the Wilderness, and afterwards held fast at Richmond by the incessant attacks and menaces there—the capture of Atlanta would certainly have been delayed, if not altogether prevented, by reinforcements to Hood from the army of Northern Virginia. At the same time, Sherman had hindered any overwhelming concentration against Grant. Lee, distracted by advances on every side, could not adequately defend himself on any ; he was obliged to allow Hood to shift for himself, and Atlanta to fall ; and in the attempt to save the communications of Richmond, he risked the loss of the Valley of Virginia. Thus Early's second retreat upon Strasburg was partly owing to the operations on the James, while Warren's success at Petersburg had been rendered more feasible by the presence of Sheridan at the North. The " team " was four-in-hand.





## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XV.

### STATEMENT OF REBEL STRENGTH TAKEN FROM THE RETURNS IN REBEL ARCHIVE OFFICE, NEAREST IN DATE TO MAY 1ST, 1864.

	DATE.	EFFECTIVE STRENGTH.	AGGREGATE PRESENT.	PRESENT & ABSENT.
Army of Northern Virginia ... ..	April 20 .	53,891	62,825	98,086
Department of Richmond ... ..	" 30 .	7,389	8,899	12,682
"        Henrico ... ..	" 20 .	1,179	1,385	3,753
"        North Carolina ... ..	Feb. 28...	12,703	15,252	21,930
District of Cape Fear ... ..	April 10 .	6,991	7,932	10,021
Department of South Carolina and Georgia	" 10 .	28,672	32,652	42,802
Local Troops at Augusta, Georgia...	Feb. 9 ...	1,365	1,427	...
Army of Tennessee ... ..	May 1 ...	43,887	63,807	96,863
Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana... ..	" 1 ...	17,514	22,544	40,078
Department of Western Virginia ... ..		6,622	7,771	11,631
Department of East Tennessee ... ..	March 31	18,387	23,917	44,042
District of the Gulf ... ..	April 22 .	9,134	10,733	15,957
Head-quarters, Paroled and Exchanged Prisoners ... ..	Feb. 4 ...	1,783	2,311	6,099
Trans-Mississippi Department ... ..		34,845	40,987	73,289
		244,362	302,442	477,233

Besides these were the local troops of the various states, of which there are no returns. They amounted to very many thousands.

### STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF WAR SHOWING THE AGGREGATE AVAIL- ABLE NATIONAL FORCE PRESENT FOR DUTY MAY 1ST, 1864, AND DISTRI- BUTED IN THE DIFFERENT COMMANDS, AS FOLLOWS:—

Department of Washington ...	42,124	Department of the Cumberland	119,948
Army of the Potomac ...	120,380	"        Ohio ...	35,416
Department of Virginia and North Carolina ...	59,139	Northern Department ..	9,546
Department of the South ...	18,165	Department of West Virginia	30,782
"        the Gulf ...	61,866	"        the East ...	2,828
"        Arkansas ...	23,666	"        the Susquehanna	2,970
"        the Tennessee	74,174	Middle Department ...	5,627
"        the Missouri...	15,770	Ninth Army Corps ...	20,780
"        the North-West	5,295	Department of New Mexico ...	3,454
"        Kansas ...	4,798	"        the Pacific ...	5,141
Head-quarters of Military Di- vision of the Mississippi ...	476		662,345

STATEMENT SHOWING THE STRENGTH OF THE ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES, PRESENT FOR DUTY EQUIPPED, APRIL 30TH, 1864.

ARMY, OR DEPARTMENT, AND COMMANDER.			PRESENT FOR DUTY, EQUIPPED.			TOTAL.
			CAVALRY.	ARTILLERY.	INFANTRY.	
Gen. Grant	Army of the Potomac	...	12,864	7,780	76,629	97,273
	Ninth Army Corps	...	1,812	1,050	19,846	22,708
	Army of the James	...	2,901	1,522	26,658	31,081
Gen. Sherman	Department of the Cumberland	...	6,602	6,318	89,191	102,111
	" " Tennessee	...	5,450	6,502	44,032	55,984
	" " Ohio	...	6,667	3,784	16,195	26,646
	Department of the South	...	251	546	8,965	9,762
	the Gulf	...	9,690	4,732	42,243	56,665
	Arkansas	...	6,360	686	10,967	18,013
	the Missouri	...	7,981	999	857	9,837
	West Virginia	...	7,972	3,597	14,727	26,296
	Washington	...	2,116	16,915	9,884	28,915
	Middle Department	...	852	1,093	2,204	4,154
	Department of the East	...	...	1,148	649	1,797
	Northern Department	...	...	236	6,629	6,865
	Department of the North-west	...	1,775	56	996	2,827
	the Susquehanna	...	701	253	1,294	2,248
	New Mexico	...	1,390	50	2,281	3,721
	the Pacific	...	1,907	160	8,575	5,642
	Kansas	...	4,440	104	89	4,633
	Virginia and North Carolina*	...	3,425	2,619	10,225	16,269
	Aggregate	...	85,156	60,155	388,136	583,447

\* The figures shown on line of Department of Virginia and North Carolina are the troops serving in Virginia and North Carolina not included in the army of the James.

E. D. TOWNSEND,  
Adjutant-General.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D. C.  
March 19, 1872.



LIST OF CORPS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS IN THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC  
AND THE NINTH CORPS, MAY 4TH, 1864.

2ND CORPS—MAJ.-GEN. W. S. HANCOCK.

1st Division—Brig.-Gen. F. C. Barlow.

2nd Division—Brig.-Gen. John Gibbon.

3rd Division—Maj.-Gen. D. B. Birney.

4th Division—Brig.-Gen. J. B. Carr.

7TH CORPS—MAJ.-GEN. JOHN SEDGWICK.

1st Division—Brig.-Gen. H. G. Wright.

2nd Division—Brig.-Gen. G. W. Getty.

3rd Division—Brig.-Gen. J. B. Ricketts.

5TH CORPS—MAJ.-GEN. G. K. WARREN.

1st Division—Brig.-Gen. Charles Griffin.

2nd Division—Brig.-Gen. J. C. Robinson.

3rd Division—Brig.-Gen. S. W. Crawford.

4th Division—Brig.-Gen. J. S. Wadsworth.

CAVALRY CORPS—MAJ.-GEN. P. H. SHERIDAN.

1st Division—Brig.-Gen. H. T. A. Torbert.

2nd Division—Brig.-Gen. D. McM. Gregg.

3rd Division—Brig.-Gen. J. H. Wilson.

9TH CORPS—MAJ.-GEN. A. E. BURNSIDE.

1st Division—Brig.-Gen. T. G. Stevenson.

2nd Division—Brig.-Gen. R. B. Potter.

3rd Division—Brig.-Gen. O. B. Wilcox.

4th Division—Brig.-Gen. E. Ferrero.

GENERAL W. F. SMITH'S SUGGESTIONS FOR A CAMPAIGN IN NORTH  
CAROLINA.

On the 8th of January, 1864, Halleck explained to Grant the situation of the army of the Potomac, and its prospects, referring particularly to operations in North Carolina, and remarked: "It was hoped that when the season advanced so as to prevent further operations by the army of the Potomac, a portion of it could be detached for service elsewhere. . . . As an interchange of views on the present condition of affairs and the coming campaign will be advantageous, I hope you will write me fully and freely on these matters." To this, on the 15th, Grant replied: "Heretofore I have refrained from suggesting what might be done in other commands than my own, in co-operation with it, or even to think much over the matter. But as you have kindly asked me in your letter of the 8th of January, only just received, for an interchange of views on our present situation, I will write you again in a day or two, going outside of my own operations."

Brigadier-General W. F. Smith was at this time chief engineer on Grant's staff. He had served in the army of the Potomac, commanding a division during McClellan's Peninsula and Antietam campaigns, but his appointment as major-general not having been confirmed by the Senate, he was reduced to the rank of brigadier. Never having himself served at the East, and having no other officer near of Eastern experience, Grant consulted Smith, when Halleck thus invited an expression of views in regard

to an Eastern campaign; and the result was the following letter:—

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, *January 19, 1864.*

*Major-General H. W. HALLECK,*

*Washington, D. C.:*

*Confidential.]*

I would respectfully suggest whether an abandonment of all previously-attempted lines to Richmond is not advisable, and in lieu of these, one to be taken further south. I would suggest Raleigh, N. C., as the objective point, and Suffolk as the starting point. Raleigh once secured, I would make Newbern the base of supplies until Wilmington is secured. A moving force of sixty thousand men would probably be required to start on such an expedition. This force would not have to be increased unless Lee should withdraw from his present position. In that case, the necessity for so large a force on the Potomac would not exist. A force moving from Suffolk would destroy, first, all the roads about Weldon, or even as far north as Hicksford. From Weldon to Raleigh they would scarcely meet with serious opposition. Once there, the most interior line of railway still left to the enemy—in fact, the only one they would then have—would be so threatened as to force him to use a large portion of his army in guarding it. This would virtually force an evacuation of Virginia, and indirectly of East Tennessee. It would throw our armies into new fields, where they could partially live upon the country, and would reduce the stores of the enemy. It would cause thousands of North Carolina troops to desert and return to their homes. It would give us possession of many negroes who are now indirectly aiding the rebellion. It would draw the enemy from campaigns of their own choosing, and for which they are prepared, to new lines of operations never expected to become necessary. It would effectually blockade Wilmington, the post now of more value to the enemy than all the balance of their sea-coast. It would enable operations to commence at once, by removing the war to a more southern climate, instead of months of inactivity in winter quarters. Other advantages might be cited which would be likely to grow out of this plan, but these are enough. From your better opportunities of studying the country and the armies that

would be involved in this plan, you will be better able to judge of the practicability of it than I possibly can.

I have written this in accordance with what I understood to be an invitation from you to express my views about military operations, and not to insist that any plan of mine should be carried out. Whatever course is agreed upon, I shall always believe is at least intended for the best, and until fully tested, will hope to have it prove so.

U. S. GRANT, *Major-General.*

All these ideas were those of Smith, upon whose judgment in this matter, for the reasons mentioned, Grant, in his own unacquaintance with the country and campaigns on the Atlantic coast, naturally relied. When, however, he visited the East in person, and studied for himself the situation there, he at once abandoned these plans and views. After his first visit to Washington, he never dreamed of undertaking or advising the operations sketched above.

GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL MEADE.

IN FIELD, CULPEPER COURT-HOUSE, }  
VIRGINIA, April 9, 1864. }

*Major-General G. G. MEADE,*  
*commanding Army of the Potomac:*

For information, and as instructions to govern your preparations for the coming campaign, the following is communicated, confidential, for your own perusal alone.

So far as practicable, all the armies are to move together and towards one common centre. Banks has been instructed to turn over the guarding of the Red river to General Steele and the navy, to abandon Texas, with the exception of the Rio Grande, and to concentrate all the force he can, not less than 25,000 men, to move on Mobile. This he is to do without reference to other movements. From the scattered condition of his command, however, he cannot possibly get it together to leave New Orleans before the 1st of May, if so soon. Sherman will move at the same time you do, or two or three days in advance, Jo. Johnston's army being his objective point and the heart of Georgia his



ultimate aim. If successful, he will secure the line from Chattanooga to Mobile, with the aid of Banks. Sigel cannot spare troops from his army to reinforce either of the great armies ; but he can aid them by moving directly to his front. This he has been directed to do, and is now making preparations for it. Two columns of his command will make south at the same time with the general move ; one from Beverly, from 10,000 to 12,000 strong, under Major-General Ord ; the other from Charleston, Virginia, principally cavalry, under Brigadier-General Crook. The former of these will endeavor to reach the Tennessee and Virginia railroad about south of Covington, and if found practicable, will work eastward to Lynchburg, and return to its base by way of the Shenandoah Valley, or join you. The other will strike at Saltville, Virginia, and come eastward to join Ord. The cavalry from Ord's command will try to force a passage southward, if they are successful in reaching the Virginia and Tennessee railroad, to cut the main lines of the road connecting Richmond with all the South and South-West.

Gillmore will join Butler with about 10,000 men from South Carolina. Butler can reduce his garrison so as to take 23,000 men into the field directly to his front. The force will be commanded by Major-General W. F. Smith. With Smith and Gillmore, Butler will seize City Point and operate against Richmond from the south side of the river. His movement will be simultaneous with yours. Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also. The only point upon which I am now in doubt is whether it will be better to cross the Rapidan above, or below him. Each plan presents great advantages over the other, with corresponding objections. By crossing above, Lee is cut off from all chance of ignoring Richmond and going north on a raid. But if we take this route, all we do must be done whilst the rations we start with hold out. We separate from Butler, so that he cannot be directed how to co-operate. By the other route, Brandy station can be used as a base of supplies until another is secured on the York or James rivers.

These advantages and objections I will talk over with you more fully than I can write them.

Burnside, with a force of probably 25,000 men, will reinforce you. Immediately upon his arrival, which will be shortly after

the 20th inst., I will give him the defence of the road from Bull Run as far south as we wish to hold it. This will enable you to collect all your strength about Brandy station, and to the front.

There will be naval co-operation on the James river, and transports and ferries will be provided ; so that should Lee fall back into his entrenchments at Richmond, Butler's force and yours will be a unit, or at least can be made to act as such. What I would direct, then, is that you commence at once reducing baggage to the very lowest possible standard. Two wagons to a regiment of five hundred men is the greatest number that should be allowed for all baggage, exclusive of subsistence stores and ordnance stores. One wagon to brigade and one to division head-quarters is sufficient, and about two to corps' head-quarters.

Should by Lee's right flank be our route, you will want to make arrangements for having supplies of all sorts promptly forwarded to White House, on the Pamunkey. Your estimates for this contingency should be made at once. If not wanted there, there is every probability they will be wanted on the James river, or elsewhere.

If Lee's left is turned, large provision will have to be made for ordnance stores. I would say, not much short of five hundred rounds of infantry ammunition would do. By the other, half the amount would be sufficient.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

EXTRACTS FROM DESPATCHES OF GENERALS HALLECK AND BANKS RELATIVE TO RED RIVER CAMPAIGN, AND ESPECIALLY TO MOVEMENTS IN TEXAS.

"It is important that we immediately occupy some point or points in Texas. Whether the movement should be made by land or water is not yet decided."—*Halleck to Banks, July 31, 1863.*

"There are important reasons why our flag should be restored in some part of Texas with the least possible delay. Do this by land, at Galveston, at Indianola, or at any other point you may deem preferable."—*Halleck to Banks, August 6, 1863.*

"In my despatch to you of the 6th inst., sent by the direction of the Secretary of War, it was left entirely to your own discretion to select any point for occupation in Texas, either on the seaboard or in the interior. . . In my opinion neither Indianola

nor Galveston is the proper point of attack. If it is necessary, as urged by Mr. Seward, that the flag be restored to some one point in Texas, that can be best and most safely effected by a combined military and naval movement up the Red river to Alexandria, Natchitoches, or Shreveport, and the military occupation of Northern Texas. . . Nevertheless your choice is left unrestricted. . . I write this simply as a suggestion, and not as a military instruction."—*Halleck to Banks, August 10.*

"General Banks has been left at liberty to select his own objective point in Texas, and may determine to move by sea."—*Halleck to Grant, August 24.*

"Be cautious in moving on the Rio Grande. . . You will readily perceive the object of our immediately occupying some part of Texas."—*Halleck to Banks, August 28.*

"The failure of the attempt to land at Sabine is only another of the numerous examples of the uncertain and unreliable character of maritime results. The chances are against their success. . . I do not regard Sabine city in the same light you do. . . Nevertheless . . . you may be able to accomplish the wishes of the government by the route you have chosen sooner than by any other."—*Halleck to Banks, September 30.*

"In regard to your Sabine and Rio Grande expeditions, no notice of your intention to make them was received here till they were actually undertaken."—*Halleck to Banks, December 7.*

"The movement of the latter [Banks] on the Rio Grande was unexpected, and contrary to the advice of the government."—*Halleck to Grant, December 11.*

"Your despatch of the 6th was received this morning at nine o'clock. There will be no delay in the execution of your orders. . . I have forwarded a full statement of my purpose and plans by mail."—*Banks to Halleck, August 15.*

See also despatches of Banks to Halleck, of August 26 (two), September 5, August 31 (orders to Franklin), September 21, 26, October 16, 22, November 4, 13, 18, 20, 28, 20 (from Stone), and December 5, in which Banks gave full information of his plans.

All these documents are printed in the Report of Committee on Conduct of the War, Volume II., 1865.



## GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL HALLECK.

HEAD-QUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSISSIPPI, }  
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE, December 7, 1863. }

*Major-General H. W. HALLECK,*

*General-in-Chief, Washington, D. C. :*

It may now safely be assumed that the enemy are driven from this front, or at least that they no longer threaten it in any formidable numbers. The country south of this is extremely mountainous, affording but little for the support of an army ; the roads are bad at all times, and the season is so far advanced that an extensive campaign from here this winter may be looked upon as impossible. Our supplies and means of transportation would not admit of a very early campaign, if the season did. Not feeling willing, or rather desiring to avoid keeping so large a force idle for months, I take the liberty of suggesting a plan of campaign that I think will go far towards breaking down the rebellion before spring. It will at least keep the enemy harassed, and prevent that reorganization which could be effected by spring, if left uninterrupted.

The rainy season will soon set in. The roads will then be so bad that the enemy cannot move a large army into Tennessee. A comparatively small force will be able to hold the present line, and thereby relieve the railroads, and enable them to accumulate supplies by the time the roads become passable. With the force thus relieved, and what can be gathered from other parts of this military division, I propose, with the concurrence of higher authority, to move by way of New Orleans and Pascagoula, on Mobile. I would hope to secure that place, or its investment, by the last of January. Should the enemy make an elaborate resistance at Mobile, I would fortify outside, and leave a garrison sufficient to hold the garrison of the town, and with the balance of the army make a campaign into the interior of Alabama, and possibly Georgia. The campaign, of course, would be suggested by the movements of the enemy. It seems to me this move would secure the entire states of Alabama and Mississippi, and a part of Georgia ; or force Lee to abandon Virginia and North Carolina. Without his force, the enemy have not got men enough to resist the army I can take.

There is no necessity for me enlarging upon this, because I

could say nothing in favor of it that will not suggest itself to you. Hoping an early reply by telegraph, this is respectfully submitted.

I am, General, etc.,

U. S. GRANT, *Major-General.*

GENERAL SHERMAN TO GENERAL BANKS.

HEAD-QUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE TENNESSEE, }  
STEAMER DIANA (UNDER WEIGH), *March 4, 1864.* }

*Major-General N. P. BANKS,*

*commanding Department of the Gulf, New Orleans:*

GENERAL: I had the honor to receive your letter of the 2nd instant yesterday at New Orleans, but was unable to answer except verbally, and I now reduce it to writing.

I will arrive at Vicksburg, the 6th instant, and I expect to meet there my command from Canton, out of which I will select two divisions of about ten thousand (10,000) men, embark them under a good commander, and order him—

1st. To rendezvous at mouth of Red river, and in concert with Admiral Porter (if he agree), to strike Harrisonburg a hard blow.

2nd. To return to Red river and ascend it, aiming to reach Alexandria on the 17th of March, to report to you.

3rd. That this command, designed to operate by water, will not be encumbered with much land transportation, say two wagons to a regiment, but with an ample supply of stores, including mortars and heavy rifled guns, to be used against fortified places.

4th. That I calculate, and so reported to General Grant, that this detachment of his forces in no event go beyond Shreveport, and that you spare them the moment you can, trying to get them back to the Mississippi in thirty days from the time they actually enter Red river.

The year is wearing away fast, and I would like to carry to General Grant at Huntsville, Alabama, every man of this division as early in April as possible, as I am sure we ought to move from the base of the Tennessee river to the south before the season is too far advanced, say April 15th next.

I feel certain of your complete success provided you make the concentration in time, to assure which I will see in person to the

embarkation and dispatch of my quota, and I will write to General Steele, conveying to him my personal and professional opinion that the present opportunity is the most perfect one that will ever offer itself to him to clean out his enemies.

Wishing you all honor and success, I am, with respect,

Your friend and servant,

W. T. SHERMAN, *Major-General.*

GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL BANKS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 31, 1864.*

*Major-General N. P. BANKS,*  
*commanding Department Gulf:*

In addition to the directions sent you by Lieutenant Towner, for immediate concentration at New Orleans of all the force you can spare from the defence of your department, preparatory to a move against Mobile, I would add the following:—

1st. If successful in your expedition against Shreveport, that you turn over the defence of the Red river to General Steele and the navy.

2nd. That you abandon Texas entirely, with the exception of your hold upon the Rio Grande. This can be held with four thousand men, if they will turn their attention immediately to fortifying their positions. At least one-half of the force required for this service might be taken from the colored troops.

3rd. By properly fortifying on the Mississippi river, the force to guard it, from Port Hudson to New Orleans, can be reduced to ten thousand men, if not to a less number. Six thousand more would then hold all the rest of the territory necessary to hold until active operations can again be resumed west of the river. According to your last returns this would give you a force of over thirty thousand effective men with which to move against Mobile. To this I expect to add five thousand men from Missouri. If, however, you think the force here stated too small to hold the territory regarded as necessary to hold possession of, I would say concentrate at least twenty-five thousand men of your present command for operations against Mobile. With these and such additions as I can give you from elsewhere, lose no time in making a demonstration to be followed by an attack against Mobile. Two or



more ironclads will be ordered to report to Admiral Farragut. This gives him a strong naval fleet with which to co-operate. You can make your own arrangements with the Admiral for his co-operation, and select your own line of approach. My own idea of the matter is that Pascagoula should be your base, but from your long service in the Gulf Department you will know best about the matter. It is intended that your movements shall be co-operative with movements elsewhere, and you cannot now start too soon. All I would now add is that you commence the concentration of your force at once. Preserve a profound secrecy of what you intend doing, and start at the earliest possible moment.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL HALLECK.

CULPEPER, 6 P.M., April 29, 1864.

*Major-General HALLECK,*  
*Washington, D. C.:*

Of the four department commanders west of the Mississippi I would prefer Steele to take the general charge. But he cannot be spared from his special command. There is no one to fully take his place. I would leave Banks in command of his department, but order him to his head-quarters in New Orleans. If you could go in person, and take charge of the Trans-Mississippi Division until it is relieved from its present dilemma, and then place a commander over it, or let it return to separate departments, as now, leaving General Canby temporarily in your place, I believe it would be the best that can be done. I am well aware of the importance of your remaining where you are at this time, and the only question is, which of the two duties is the most important. If a commander must be taken from out there, to take general charge, I would give it to Steele, giving Reynolds his place.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

GENERAL HALLECK TO GENERAL BANKS.

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., April 27, 1864. }

*Major-General BANKS,*  
*Department of the Gulf, via Cairo:*

Lieutenant-General Grant directs that on receipt of this order

you will return yourself immediately to New Orleans, and make preparations to carry out his previous instructions the moment your troops return to that place. The troops in the field will be left under command of the senior officer, with instructions, if Shreveport has been taken, and junction formed with Steele, to leave General Steele with all of General Smith's troops, if necessary, and the navy, to hold the line of Red river.

If, when this is received, you shall have failed to accomplish the object of your campaign, by securing Red river to Shreveport, you will direct the officer left in command to see the gunboats safely out of Red river as soon as possible, and then return all the troops rapidly to where they belong ; General Steele returning to and holding the line of the Arkansas.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to General Steele, *via* Little Rock, with instructions to communicate with you as early as possible.

The commanding officers at Cairo and Little Rock will send this to Generals Banks and Steele by special messengers.

H. W. HALLECK, *Major-General,*  
*Chief of Staff.*

# APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XVI.

NUMBER OF OFFICERS AND MEN "PRESENT FOR DUTY" AND "PRESENT FOR DUTY EQUIPPED" IN THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, MAY 1, 1864, AS SHOWN BY THE "TRI-MONTHLY RETURNS" OF THE SEVERAL DIVISIONS AND CORPS, ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

COMMANDS.*	FOR DUTY.			FOR DUTY EQUIPPED.		
	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN.	TOTAL.	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN.	TOTAL.
<i>Army of Potomac, Hdqrs.</i>	43	..	43	..	..	..
Provost Guard ..	69	1,057	1,126	70	1,048	1,118
Engineer Brigade ..	45	1,917	1,962	..	..	..
Batt. U.S. Engineers ..	5	309	314	..	..	..
Guards and Orderlies ..	21	59	61	..	..	..
Artillery Reserve ..	141	4,446	4,587	123	4,443	4,566
Signal Corps ..	14	207	221	..	..	..
Total..	319	7,995	8,314	193	5,491	5,684
<i>Cavalry Corps, Hdqrs. ..</i>	10	..	10	..	..	..
1st Division ..	243	5,863	6,111	216	4,210	4,426
2nd " ..	194	4,862	5,056	209	4,386	4,595
3rd " ..	136	3,353	3,489	151	2,895	3,046
6th U.S. Cavalry ..	0	348	357	0	348	357
Artillery Brigade ..	24	778	802	24	839	863
Total Cavalry Corps..	616	15,209	15,825	609	12,678	13,287
<i>2nd Army Corps, Staff ..</i>	13	7	20	..	..	..
1st Division ..	348	7,766	8,114	362	7,670	8,032
2nd " ..	312	6,397	6,709	312	6,330	6,642
3rd " ..	346	6,857	7,203	338	6,741	7,079
4th " ..	271	4,701	4,972	264	4,664	4,928
Artillery Brigade ..	55	1,602	1,657	50	1,602	1,652
Battalion Engineers ..	0	320	329	..	..	..
Total 2nd Army Corps	1,354	27,650	29,004	1,326	27,007	28,333
<i>5th Army Corps, Staff ..</i>	10	..	10	..	..	..
Batt. 12th N.Y. Vols.	3	136	139	3	136	139
Artillery Brigade ..	46	1,390	1,436	45	1,525	1,570
1st Division ..	402	8,377	8,779	402	8,227	8,629
2nd " ..	273	5,046	5,319	271	4,796	5,067
3rd " ..	218	3,285	3,503	214	3,305	3,519
4th " ..	315	6,506	6,821	305	6,434	6,739
Total 5th Army Corps	1,267	24,740	26,007	1,240	24,423	25,663
<i>6th Army Corps, Staff ..</i>	8	..	8	..	..	..
Cavalry Escort ..	2	48	50	2	48	50
Engineer Detachment ..	9	367	376	9	379	388
Artillery Brigade ..	48	1,532	1,580	43	1,536	1,579
1st Division ..	365	7,375	7,740	356	7,192	7,548
2nd " ..	426	8,912	9,338	430	8,784	9,214
3rd " ..	213	5,119	5,332	208	5,226	5,434
Total 6th Army Corps	1,071	23,353	24,424	1,048	23,165	24,213
<i>9th Army Corps, Hdqrs.</i>	15	..	15	..	..	..
Cavalry ..	84	1,782	1,866	84	1,782	1,866
8th U.S. Infantry ..	10	267	267	12	257	269
Provisional Brigade ..	114	3,361	3,475	114	3,361	3,475
1st Division ..	126	3,095	3,221	124	3,073	3,197
2nd " ..	253	5,258	5,511	269	4,799	5,068
3rd " ..	211	4,953	5,164	207	4,953	5,160
4th " ..	158	3,569	3,727	158	3,569	3,727
Total 9th Army Corps	971	22,275	23,246	968	21,794	22,762

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., February 9, 1877.

E. D. TOWNSEND,  
Adjutant-General.







Artillery: Br.-Gen. W. N. Pendleton	1st Army Corps.	18	409	2	56	2	169	7	51	101	1	19	446	465	5	110	1	11	599	463
	2d " "	90	1,600	2	56	2	169	7	51	101	1	19	446	465	5	110	1	11	2,608	1,904
	8d " "	111	2,204	1	100	9	192	8	12	124	2,508	2,632	18	655	2	61	3,368	2,368		
	Cavalry Corps.	18	404	..	21	1	24	..	5	19	454	473	8	150	..	48	674	467		
	Total	237	4,617	3	184	13	414	10	69	263	5,234	5,547	38	1,414	7	231	7,237	5,402		
Unattached Commands.	Valley Districts	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Maryland Line	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Provost Guard	45	760	1	28	2	69	1	2	54	859	913	17	270	9	142	1,351	887		
	Battalion Scouts	27	293	..	17	2	45	..	3	29	358	387	11	186	..	..	584	387		
	G. and Couriers.	11	219	1	12	1	19	..	2	13	252	265	4	72	1	13	355	274		
Grand total	Total	88	1,272	2	57	5	193	1	7	96	1,469	1,565	32	528	10	155	2,290	1,513		
	1 2 8 30 59 24 43 65 11 41 4 6 40 31 37 17 50,174 205 3218 129 4232 151 634 4567 53,253 62,825 1033 25,111 646 8,451 98,056 61,213																			

\* Hoke's brigade detached, not reported.

† The inaccuracies in this return are in the original document.

† Two regiments detached, not reported.

§ Not reported.

STATION: ORANGE COURT-HOUSE, VA.

DATE: April 20, 1864.

Respectfully submitted.

(Signed) W. H. TAYLOR,  
Assistant Adjutant-General.

Respectfully submitted.

(Signed) R. E. LEE,  
General Commanding.





EXTRACT FROM LETTER OF MAJOR-GENERAL HUMPHREYS, CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMY OF POTOMAC (AND AFTERWARDS CHIEF ENGINEER, UNITED STATES ARMY), TO EDITOR "HISTORICAL MAGAZINE," OCTOBER, 1875.

In my address I stated that when the campaign of 1864 opened, the strength of the army of the Potomac was as follows, viz.:—

"76,000 infantry in three corps, commanded by Sedgwick, Hancock, and Warren, and about 12,000 cavalry commanded by Sheridan, with a large artillery force, having its own guard, which, when the artillery was reduced (about the middle of May), was joined to one of the infantry corps. Burnside had some 15,000 or 20,000 men which united with the army of the Potomac, early on the morning of the 6th May, the second day of the battle of the Wilderness."

Referring to the full returns in the office of the Adjutant-General of the Army, I find that the infantry of the three corps "present for duty" aggregated (officers and enlisted men) 73,929, and "present for duty equipped" amounted to 73,390. The cavalry aggregated 12,424; the artillery consisted of 274 guns with an artillery guard of 2,450 officers and enlisted men. This guard, as I have mentioned, together with some of the artillery (troops), was joined to one of the infantry corps, when the artillery (guns) was reduced about the middle of May. The engineer battalion numbered 314 officers and enlisted men. The engineer brigade in charge of the bridge trams, and the provost guard, I have not included; nor have I added the "extra-duty men" of the quartermasters', subsistence, and medical departments, amounting in all to 19,183; nor are such men properly included in the strength of any army.

According to the returns in the office of the Adjutant-General of the Army, Burnside's command, the Ninth corps, aggregated "present for duty equipped" 19,486, when, on the morning of the 6th May, he united with the army of the Potomac. As this corps formed no part of the army of the Potomac until the end of May, I had no exact information as to its strength on the 6th May among my papers.

The strength of Lee's force I stated to be three infantry corps, "each about 20,000 strong, commanded by Ewell, Hill,

and Longstreet, who (the last named) arrived the 3rd May, and 8,000 or 10,000 cavalry commanded by Stuart, with a due proportion of artillery. The artillery of both armies was more than could be used in that country, and with us was cumbersome, and therefore reduced when we were near Fredericksburg."

My information concerning Lee's force was derived from the Secret Service Department of the Army of the Potomac, which received information almost daily of the numbers of, and changes in every part of, Lee's Army.

My position as Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac led me to make constant investigation of the data possessed by that service, and of the sources from which the information was obtained.

ESTIMATE OF LEE'S STRENGTH, APRIL, 1864, BY BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL HUMPHREYS, THEN CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

"Estimate of Lee's Forces made by me, April, 1864, taken from my original memoranda.

A. A. HUMPHREYS.

*July 1, 1868.*

Lee, original	...	...	...	...	...	45,000
Lee, conscripts	...	...	...	...	...	10,000
Longstreet	...	...	...	...	...	15,000
						<hr/> 70,000
Breckenridge (Polk)	...	...	...	...	...	10,000
Pickett	...	...	...	...	..	10,000
Beauregard	...	...	...	...	...	15,000
City of Richmond	..	...	...	...	...	6,000
						<hr/> 111,000"



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XVII.

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GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL HALLECK.

NEAR SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT-HOUSE, }  
May 10, 1864, 9.30 A.M. }

*Major-General HALLECK,*  
*Washington, D. C.:*

The enemy hold our front in very strong force, and evince a strong determination to interpose between us and Richmond to the last. I shall take no backward steps, but may be compelled to send back to Belle Plain for further supplies. Please have supplies of forage and provisions sent there at once, and fifty rounds of ammunition (infantry) for one hundred thousand men. Send General Benham with the necessary bridge train for the Rappahannock river. We can maintain ourselves at least, and in the end beat Lee's army I believe.

Send to Belle Plain all the infantry you can rake and scrape. With present position of the armies, ten thousand men can be spared from the defences of Washington, besides all the troops that have reached there since Burnside's departure. Some may also be brought from Wallace's department. We want no more wagons or artillery.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL HALLECK.

NEAR SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT-HOUSE, }  
May 11, 1864, 8.30 A.M. }

*Major-General HALLECK, Chief of Staff of the Army,*  
*Washington, D. C.:*

We have now ended the sixth day of very heavy fighting. The result to this time is much in our favor. But our losses

have been heavy, as well as those of the enemy. We have lost to this time eleven general officers killed, wounded, and missing, and probably twenty thousand men. I think the loss of the enemy must be greater, we having taken over four thousand prisoners, whilst he has taken from us but few except a few stragglers. I am now sending back to Belle Plain all my wagons for a fresh supply of provisions and ammunition, and purpose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer.

The arrival of reinforcements here will be very encouraging to the men, and I hope they will be sent as fast as possible, and in as great numbers. My object in having them sent to Belle Plain was to use them as an escort to our supply trains. If it is more convenient to send them out by train to march from the railroad to Belle Plain or Fredericksburg, send them so.

I am satisfied the enemy are very shaky, and are only kept up to the mark by the greatest exertions on the part of their officers, and by keeping them entrenched in every position they take.

Up to this time there is no indication of any portion of Lee's army being detached for the defence of Richmond.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

GENERAL R. E. LEE TO REBEL SECRETARY OF WAR.—(DATED REBEL HEAD-QUARTERS, MAY 12, AND RECEIVED AT HANOVER JUNCTION, MAY 12, 1864.)

This morning at dawn the enemy broke through that part of our line occupied by Johnson's division, and gained possession of a portion of our breastworks, which he still holds. A number of pieces of artillery fell into his hands. The engagement has continued all day, and with the exception indicated we have maintained our ground. In the beginning of the action we lost a large number of prisoners; but, thanks to a merciful Providence, our subsequent casualties were not large. Major-General Johnson and Brigadier-General Stewart were taken prisoners. The brave general Perrin was killed, and Generals Walker, of the Stonewall brigade, and Daniel, severely wounded.

R. E. LEE.

## GENERAL HUMPHREYS TO GENERAL WARREN.

HEAD-QUARTERS, ARMY OF POTOMAC, }  
May 11, 6.30 P.M. }

*Major-General WARREN, etc. :*

I am instructed by the Major-General commanding to inform you that the Second corps will be withdrawn to-night from its position, which you will hold with your corps in addition to the position now held by you. Colonel Kitching's heavy artillery brigade will be retained by you. You will arrange with the commander of the Second corps the time and order of withdrawal of the troops of that corps, and the occupation by your troops of their position. You will shorten your line, wherever in your judgment, upon a consideration of all the circumstances, it would be advisable. To aid in meeting an attack of the enemy or his advance upon our right, General Wright, commanding Sixth corps, will post at Alsop's, in the vicinity of your present head-quarters, a division of his corps, under the command of General Russell, that will be held ready to move wherever required. Another division of his corps, under General Wheaton, will be held ready near his own position, to support wherever needed. The combined attack of Burnside and Hancock will take place at 4.30 A.M. to-morrow, at which hour your troops will be in readiness. Head-quarters will be at —

A. A. H., ETC.

## GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL HALLECK.

NEAR SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT-HOUSE, }  
May 16, 1864. }

*Major-General HALLECK,*  
*Washington, D. C. :*

Private letters and official statements from the Department of the Gulf show such a state of affairs there as to demand, in my opinion, the immediate removal of General Banks. The army have undoubtedly lost confidence in him. I would suggest the appointment of Franklin to the command of the Nineteenth corps, and Reynolds or Hunter to the command of the Department.



I, myself, would have no objection to seeing Franklin in command of the Department. This is sent on the supposition that Canby has gone in command of the Military Division of the Trans-Mississippi. If Canby has simply relieved Banks in command of the Department, then the change will be satisfactory.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

GENERAL HALLECK TO GENERAL CANBY.

WASHINGTON, May 7, 1864.

*Major-General E. R. S. CANBY,*

*Washington :*

GENERAL : The Secretary of War directs that you immediately repair to the Military Division of the West, Mississippi, and assume the direction of all military operations in the Departments of the Gulf and of Arkansas. You will perceive from the despatches sent to and received from Generals Grant, Sherman, Steele, and Banks, that the main object of the recent military operations west of the Mississippi river was the occupation of Red river so as to shorten our line of defence of the Mississippi from interruption from the western side, and to prevent any large forces from penetrating into Arkansas, Missouri, or the Indian territory. This would also enable us to dispense with the present difficult and expensive line of defence on the Arkansas river, and to diminish the military posts at Helena and New Madrid. The failure to carry out this plan has, it is believed, resulted from General Banks's delay to co-operate in time with Generals Steele and A. J. Smith, and his meeting and fighting the enemy by detachments instead of his whole force in mass.

You will perceive from General Grant's despatches that he has Banks's military capacity, and has consequently directed him to turn over the command of his troops to the senior officer in the field, and return to New Orleans. General Grant at one time ordered a part of the troops of the Department of the Gulf to New Orleans to operate against Mobile, but this project has been given up, and all troops in your division will be retained for duty west of the Mississippi. You will also receive herewith authority to employ, in case of necessity, any troops on the east bank of the river belonging to General Sher-

man's command. It is presumed, however, that General Sherman has left there only such forces as were deemed necessary for securing the navigation of the river ; none should therefore,

except in case of emergency, and after you have satisfied yourself that the garrisons left are sufficient for the security of the places occupied.

The Secretary of War directed some time since that Major-General Reynolds be placed in command of New Orleans and its defences. This order will not be construed to prevent you from replacing General Reynolds if you want him with you in the field or any other command.

You are authorized by the Secretary of War to remove from your command any officer whom you may deem inefficient or incompetent, reporting to the Adjutant-General your reasons for so doing.

It is understood that General Banks has lost a very considerable portion of his land transportation. You will advise with the Quartermaster-General in regard to the best means of supplying this deficiency. It is hoped, however, that you will be able to support your troops in part upon the country passed over. The enemy lives almost entirely upon the country ; we must hereafter imitate his example, and avoid as far as possible encumbering our movable columns with too large trains. Existing orders give you all necessary authority on this subject. You will perceive from a perusal of official despatches that General Banks's course in scattering his troops by the occupation of so many points upon the Gulf coast, and in operating both upon the coast and by the line of Red river, has been against the advice and instructions sent to him by his superiors. Success can be gained only by concentration upon some important point, and avoiding all detachments and double lines of operations.

The co-operation of General Steele's corps with the main column on Red river was arranged between that officer, General Sherman, and General Banks, and his movement on Camden resulted from the danger of leaving the line of the Arkansas too weak if he should attempt to join Banks's column by water. His movement seemed to have had the desired effect of at the same time covering the Arkansas and of drawing a portion of the rebel forces from General Banks's front. If on your arrival he should

still hold Camden, it might be best for you to connect with him by the Washita, instead of operating on the Red river, especially if the navigation should be impaired by low water. If General Steele should have returned to Little Rock, it will be for you to determine whether he shall again advance towards Camden or upon some other line. If General Banks has retreated down Red river, it is very possible that the enemy will throw a large force against Steele.

At this distance from the theatre of war it is not possible to give special instructions or to anticipate the condition of your command at the time you will reach it ; you are therefore invested with all the power and authority which the President can confer on you, and you will act in all things as you may think best to secure the object in view—the restoration of the authority of the United States west of the Mississippi.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

H. W. HALLECK,  
*Major-General, Chief of Staff.*

P.S.—I am directed to call your attention particularly to the importance of protecting the gunboats in the Red river by the military forces under your command.

H. W. HALLECK,  
*Major-General, Chief of Staff.*

The omissions in this despatch are in the copy furnished to Author from the War Department.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XVIII.

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GENERAL R. E. LEE TO REBEL SECRETARY OF WAR.

SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT-HOUSE, *via* CHESTERFIELD, }  
8 A.M., May 21, 1864. }

H. J. A. SEDDON, *Secretary of War* :

The enemy is apparently again changing his base. Three (3) gunboats came up to Port Royal two days since. This morning an infantry force appeared at Guinea's. His cavalry advance at Downer's Bridge on Bowling Green road. He is apparently placing the Mattapony between us, and will probably open communication with Port Royal. I am extending on the Telegraph road, and will regulate my movements by the information . . . of. His route, I fear, will secure him from attack till he crosses Pamunkey.

R. E. LEE.

GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL BUTLER.

FORTRESS MONROE, VIRGINIA, April 2, 1864.

*Major-General* BENJAMIN F. BUTLER,  
*commanding Department of Virginia*  
*and North Carolina, Fortress Monroe, Va. :*

Private and Confidential.]

In the spring campaign, which it is desirable shall commence at as early a day as practicable, it is proposed to have co-operative action of all the armies in the field, as far as the object can be accomplished.

It will not be possible to unite our armies into two or three large ones to act as so many units, owing to the absolute necessity of holding on to the territory already taken from the enemy. But, generally speaking, concentration can be practically effected by armies moving to the interior of the enemy's country from the territory they have to guard—by such movement to interpose

themselves between the enemy and the country to be guarded, thereby reducing the number necessary to guard important points, and at least occupy the attention of prt of the enemy's force, if no greater object is gained. Lee's army and Richmond being the greater objects towards which our attention must be directed in the next campaign, it is desirable to unite all the forces against them. The necessity for covering Washington with the army of the Potomac and of covering your department with your army, makes it impossible to unite these forces at the beginning of any move ; I propose, therefore, what comes nearest this of anything that seems practicable. The army of the Potomac will act from its present base, Lee's army being the objective point. You will collect all the forces from your command that can be spared from garrison duty, I should say not less than twenty thousand effective men, to operate on the south side of the James river, Richmond being your objective point. To the force you already have will be added about ten thousand men from South Carolina, under Major-General Gillmore, who will command them in person. Major-General W. F. Smith is ordered to report to you, to command the troops sent into the field from your own department.

General Gillmore will be ordered to report to you at Fortress Monroe, with all his troops, on transports, by the 18th instant, or as soon thereafter as practicable. Should you not receive notice by that time to move, you will make such disposition of them and your other forces as you may deem best calculated to deceive the enemy as to the real move to be made. When you are notified to move, take City Point with as much force as possible. Fortify, or rather entrench, at once, and concentrate all your troops for the field there as rapidly as you can. From City Point, directions cannot be given, at this time, for your further movements.

The fact that has already been stated—that is, that Richmond is to be your objective point, and that there is to be co-operation between your force and the army of the Potomac, must be your guide. This indicates the necessity of your holding close to the south bank of the James river, as you advance. Then, should the enemy be forced into his entrenchments in Richmond, the army of the Potomac would follow, and by means of transports, the two armies would become a unit.

All the minor details of your advance are left entirely to your direction. If, however, you think it practicable to use your cavalry south of you so as to cut the railroad about Hicksford about the time of the general advance, it would be of immense advantage.

You will please forward for my information at the earliest practicable day, all orders, details, and instructions you may give for the execution of this order.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

CULPEPER COURT-HOUSE, *April 16, 1864.*

*Major-General B. F. BUTLER,*  
*commanding Department of Virginia and North Carolina :*

*Confidential.]*

I have just this moment received your letter of 15th April, brought by the hands of Major-General W. F. Smith. You are entirely right in saying there should be but one movement made south of James river. At no time has more been intended. I went to Fortress Monroe for the express purpose of seeing you and telling you that it was my plan to have the force under you act strictly in concert with the army of the Potomac, and as far as possible, towards the same point.

My mind was exactly made up what instructions to give, and I was very much pleased to find that your previously conceived views exactly coincided. All the forces that can be taken from the coast have been ordered to report to you at Fortress Monroe, by the 18th inst., or as soon thereafter as possible.

What I ask is, that with them, and all you can concentrate from your own command, you seize upon City Point, and act from there, looking upon Richmond as your objective point. If you can send cavalry to Hicksford, and cut the railroad connection at that point, it is a good thing to do so. I do not pretend to say how your work is to be done, but simply lay down what, and trust to you and those under you for doing it well.

Keep what vessels may be necessary for your operations. No supplies are going to North Carolina, except such as may be necessary for the troops there. I presume the call for vessels is in consequence of the preparations ordered for supplying our armies



after a new base is established. The quartermaster did not know where they were to go, but that he was to have supplies afloat, and supposed they were for North Carolina. I hope this delusion will be kept up, both North and South, until we do move.

If it should prove possible for you to reach Richmond, so as to invest all on the south side of the river, and fortify yourself there, I shall have but little fear of the result.

The rains have now continued so long that it will be impossible to move earlier than the 25th; so I will set that date for making your calculations. All men afloat could then be sent up York river, as you proposed, to conceal our real designs, if you were not then prepared to move.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

CULPEPER, VIRGINIA, April 18, 1864.

*Major-General B. F. BUTLER,*  
*commanding Department of Virginia and North Carolina:*

I send Lieut.-Colonel Dent, of my staff, with this, not with the view of changing any instructions given, but more particularly to secure full co-operation between your command and that of General Meade. I will, as you understand, expect you to move from Fortress Monroe the same day General Meade starts from here. The exact time I will telegraph as soon as it can be fixed. At present the roads are in such a condition that the time could not be fixed earlier than the 27th inst. You can understand, therefore, you have fully to that date to make your preparations. You also understand that, with the forces here, I shall aim to fight Lee between here and Richmond, if he will stand. Should Lee, however, fall back into Richmond, I will follow up and make a junction with your army on the James river. Could it be certain that you will be able to invest Richmond on the south side, so as to have your left resting on the James, above the city, I would form the junction there. Circumstances may make this course advisable anyhow; I would say, therefore, use every exertion to secure a footing as far up the south side of the river as you can, and as soon as possible. If you hear of our advancing from that direction, or have reason to judge, from the action of the enemy, that they are looking for danger to that side, attack

vigorously, and if you cannot carry the city, at least detain as large a force there as possible. You will want all the co-operation from the navy that can be got. Confer freely with Admiral Lee about your plans, that he may make as much preparation as possible. If it is possible to communicate with you after determining my exact line of march, I will do so.

Inform me by return of Colonel Dent, your present situation and state of readiness for moving.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

CULPEPER COURT-HOUSE, VA., *April 28, 1864.*

*Major-General BUTLER,*

*commanding Department of Virginia and North Carolina:*

If no unforeseen accident prevents, I will move from here on Wednesday, the 4th of May. Start your forces on the night of the 4th, so as to be as far up the James river as you can get by daylight on the morning of the 5th, and push from that time with all your might for the accomplishment of the object before you. Should anything transpire to delay my movement, I will telegraph.

Acknowledge the receipt of this by telegraph.

Everything possible is now being done to accumulate a force in Washington from the Northern states, ready to reinforce any weak points. I will instruct General Halleck to send them to you should the enemy fall behind his fortifications in Richmond. You will therefore keep the head-quarters at Washington advised of every move of the enemy so far as you know them.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

CULPEPER, 2.30 P.M., *May 1, 1864.*

*Major-General BUTLER,*

*Fortress Monroe, Virginia:*

Have you received letters from me giving date for commencing operations? If General Gillmore arrives by morning of the 3rd, those directions will be followed. Answer.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

CULPEPER, 3.30 P.M., May 2, 1864.

Major-General BUTLER,  
*Fortress Monroe, Virginia:*

What is the latest news from General Gillmore? What number of his troops is yet to arrive?

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL BUTLER.

CULPEPER, 10.30 P.M., May 2, 1864.

Major-General BUTLER,  
*Fortress Monroe, Virginia:*

Start on the date given in my letter. There will be no delay with this army. Answer, that I may know this received, and understood as regards date.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*

GENERAL BUTLER TO SECRETARY STANTON.—(TELEGRAM.)

GENERAL BUTLER'S HEAD-QUARTERS, May 17, 1864.

*Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War:*

On Thursday, May Twelfth (12), as stated in my last despatch, I sent out General Kautz with orders to cut the Danville road thoroughly, destroy the iron bridge across the Appomattox, and then, if possible, cut the canal on the James, the only remaining line of transportation to Richmond, and thence to cross the Appomattox and cut the Weldon railroad at Hicksford, so as to imprison the transportation between Hicksford and Stony Creek, where it was obliged to be massed because of the former cutting at the latter place. To prevent Kautz from being interrupted or followed until at least he was well advanced, and to concentrate the troops on this command that were marching round from Petersburg, so that they should not reinforce Lee, I marched my whole column, leaving a force of observation, upon the enemy at Petersburg, and made demonstration upon the entrenched lines of the enemy around Drury's Bluff, and remained before them until



I learned from the Richmond Press that General Kautz had cut the railroad at Coalfield, and had safely arrived at the bridge over the Appomattox.

Meanwhile we had assaulted and carried the first line of the enemy's works, which extends from Drury's Bluff over the railroad and around to Manchester. On Monday morning, about sunrise, the enemy having received reinforcements which made them then equal to my command, taking advantage of a very thick fog, made an attack upon the right of General Smith's line, and forced it back in some confusion and with considerable loss. As soon as the fog lifted, General Smith's lines were established, and the enemy was driven back to his original lines; the troops having been on incessant duty for five (5) days, three of which were in a rainstorm, I retired at leisure within my own lines. At the same time with the attack upon my front, the enemy made a heavy attack upon the forces guarding my rear, from Petersburg, in an endeavor to get possession of my entrenched lines. The attack was handsomely repulsed. We hold the railroad between Petersburg and Richmond. Prisoners inform us that Davis and Bragg were present in person.

(Signed) BENJAMIN F. BUTLER,

*Major-General Commanding.*

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XIX.

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GENERAL HUMPHREYS TO GENERAL WARREN.

HEAD-QUARTERS, ARMY OF POTOMAC, }  
June 2, 1864. }

*Major-General WARREN,  
commanding Fifth Corps :*

Your despatch by Major Roebling has been received. Major Roebling has explained the conditions existing on the right. Your connection by skirmish line with General Smith, together with the two regiments sent by General Smith, appear to be sufficient to cover communication by the road from Moody's to Bethesda church, a connection considered sufficient for the present by the Major-General commanding.

The Commanding General directs me to say that it does not appear probable that the force confronting Burnside will be found there in the morning; but be that as it may, he directs that the enemy in your front, and that of Burnside, be attacked in the morning, at 4.30 o'clock, by your troops and those of Burnside in such manner and by such combinations of the two corps as may in both your judgments be deemed best. If the enemy should appear to be in strongest force on our left, and your attack should in consequence prove successful, you will follow it up, closing in upon them towards our left; if, on the contrary, the attack on the left should be successful, it will be followed up, moving towards our right. Harmony and co-operation on the part of General Burnside and yourself is earnestly enjoined.

A. A. H.

Similar orders are sent to General Burnside. General Wilson, reinforced by 3,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, from Port Royal, is ordered to move from Hanover Court-house, by way of Hawe's shop, and attack the enemy's rear and flank.

A. A. H.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXII.

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EXTRACT FROM REPORT ON THE DEFENCES OF WASHINGTON BY MAJOR-GENERAL J. G. BARNARD, UNITED STATES ENGINEERS.

I have been kindly permitted to peruse a very interesting manuscript by Colonel R. D. Cutts, of the staff (at the time) of General Halleck, on the Early invasion. He makes a careful estimate of Early's numbers, the data for which are the telegrams received at head-quarters from Generals Sigel, Couch, and Howe, when Early was in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry; the estimate of General Wallace, who fought at Monocacy; but more especially the numbers of wounded and prisoners left behind, and the numbers of regiments and organizations represented by them.

At Monocacy 460 seriously wounded were left on the field, (the more slightly wounded having been carried away), and these represented "57 regiments of infantry,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  of cavalry, and 3 companies of artillery."

"Between the 3rd and 18th of July, or during the interval between the crossing of the Potomac by the enemy and their retreat beyond the Shenandoah, the total number of prisoners, including wounded, captured from Early's command, amounted to 1,255 officers and men; the name, rank, and regiment in each case having been carefully ascertained and recorded.

"These prisoners represented 99 regiments of infantry, 36 of cavalry and 10 of artillery organizations, besides 5 or 6 separate battalions not specified as belonging to any particular arm of the service; and estimating the strength of each infantry regiment at 180 officers and men, of the cavalry at 100, and of the artillery, 60 guns, at 100 for each battery, being actually less in each arm than



that reported by prisoners, the following aggregate numbers result :—

99 Regiments of Infantry .	...	...	...	...	17,820
36 Regiments of Cavalry	...	...	...	...	3,600
Artillery, 60 guns*	...	...	...	...	1,000
					<hr/> 22,420"

Immediately after Early's retreat the ground was examined by my aide, Lieutenant J. H. Oberteuffer, in company with an officer of the Coast Survey, the locations and extents of the bivouacs traced, and information gathered from the inhabitants as to the time occupied by passing columns both in advance and retreat, and the conversation and statements of the rebel troops. The estimate based thereon assigned more than 20,000 men to the force. . . .

In the foregoing there is a mass of circumstantial evidence that Early's total force was much greater than he states it.

\* This number is stated by General Couch as actually counted in passing the South mountain. There is no other evidence of a number greater than that given by Early, viz., forty.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXIV.

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### REMARKS UPON GENERAL JOS. E. JOHNSTON'S NUMBERS.

The following remarks, based upon General Jos. E. Johnston's "Military Narrative," are from the *Nation*, a weekly journal, published at New York, and which was never suspected of unduly favoring those who fought against the rebellion.

"It was to be expected that General Johnston would put the most favorable face upon the relative disadvantages of the Southern troops. In the matter of numbers there must be a very careful compilation of the results of official reports before anything worthy the name of a history of the war can be written. It is the habit of Southern writers, as it was of their officers in their reports of engagements, to state their own force according to the number actually engaged, but their adversary's either by a liberal guess or according to some standard different from their own. A military command is generally estimated by the number of men actually belonging to it, and the deduction to be made for absences by reason of temporary detachment, sickness, etc., is specially stated. It is of comparatively little moment what rule is adopted, if it be only applied to both sides. We have good authority for saying that this is not done in most Southern accounts of the war. Johnston gives the force with which he opened the campaign of 1864 as about forty-five thousand of all arms; and though he states this as its 'effective strength,' a civilian would hardly suspect that when the number 'present and absent' is given, the same command would swell to nearly eighty-two thousand, as it does in the figures given in the Appendix, pp. 570, 571. Davis is made to state (p. 439) that at the opening of the same campaign it amounted to 'between sixty and

seventy thousand;' and Hood in his official report called it 'an available force of seventy-five thousand men' (p. 353). It is true that Johnston combats these assertions as to his available strength, but he can hardly expect others to accept his low estimate of his force in the face of such statements, unless a careful explanation of the mode of reporting the 'effective' strength is given; whereas we have none. If we diminish the force of the Northern armies in the same ratio as he diminishes the total of his, the disparity of numbers in the campaign of 1864 will almost wholly disappear. We are permitted to give an instance in point. At the time when General Johnston disbanded his army at Greensboro', N.C., in 1865, he stated to an officer of high rank on the Union side that he supposed his 'effective' force to be about sixteen thousand men; but when the paroles were issued to them, the Federal officers found that they reached thirty thousand. It is possible that in these were included some stragglers from Lee's army, who had surrendered and been parolled some time before; but it is quite certain that the system of returns used in the United States forces would have made his command much more numerous than the 'effective' reported by him. Indeed, we are informed that he himself said at the time that their system of returns was far from reliable. To the same category belongs the report of casualties. General Johnston ignores the official reports on the Union side, or, as in the case of the attack on the Kenesaw Mountain by Sherman, says that they do not do justice to the courage of the Northern troops, while he gives freely the estimates of the 'reliable individual' with whom we thought we had finally parted when the newspaper correspondents 'came marching home.' A partial apology for this may be found in the fact that Congress has so long and inexcusably failed to spread the means of knowing the truth by printing the archives of the War Department, including those of the Confederacy in our possession. Of a little different character is the constant assertion that divisions and corps of the Union army were repulsed by single brigades, and the like. There would be little danger of misapprehending this, assuming the facts to be given with literal truth, if it were not that the character of the contest is constantly treated as if that were an open field-fight which the writer himself shows was on the one side an assault, and on the other a defence



of entrenchments generally of the most solid character used in field-works. He excuses himself for not attacking Grant's lines of circumvallation around Vicksburg on this score. It should be notorious that the primary effect of such works is to make a small defending force equal to a large attacking one, and that few instances can be cited in the war when such a line was carried by direct assault, if held by resolute and well-disciplined troops. In such a case a brigade in line in the trench is properly expected to repulse a column of brigades coming against it. As soon as the conditions were reversed, the results were also, as Hood learned to his cost. We are far from wishing to detract from the well-earned renown of the Southern army, and we limit our purpose to correcting what, to the casual reader, must be misleading in General Johnston's mode of putting his case, though not an intentional mis-statement. The book will stimulate more writing by actors in the contest who directly or indirectly came under Johnston's criticism. We shall heartily welcome this, as tending to such an increase of testimony from various standpoints as will prepare the way for the historian who must coolly sum up the case. Meanwhile we trust Congress will not remain insensible to the demand for the publication of those facts and figures which the files of the War Department only can give, and without which, much of all such narratives must be mere conjecture, colored by the partisan feelings of the writer, on whichever side he may have fought."















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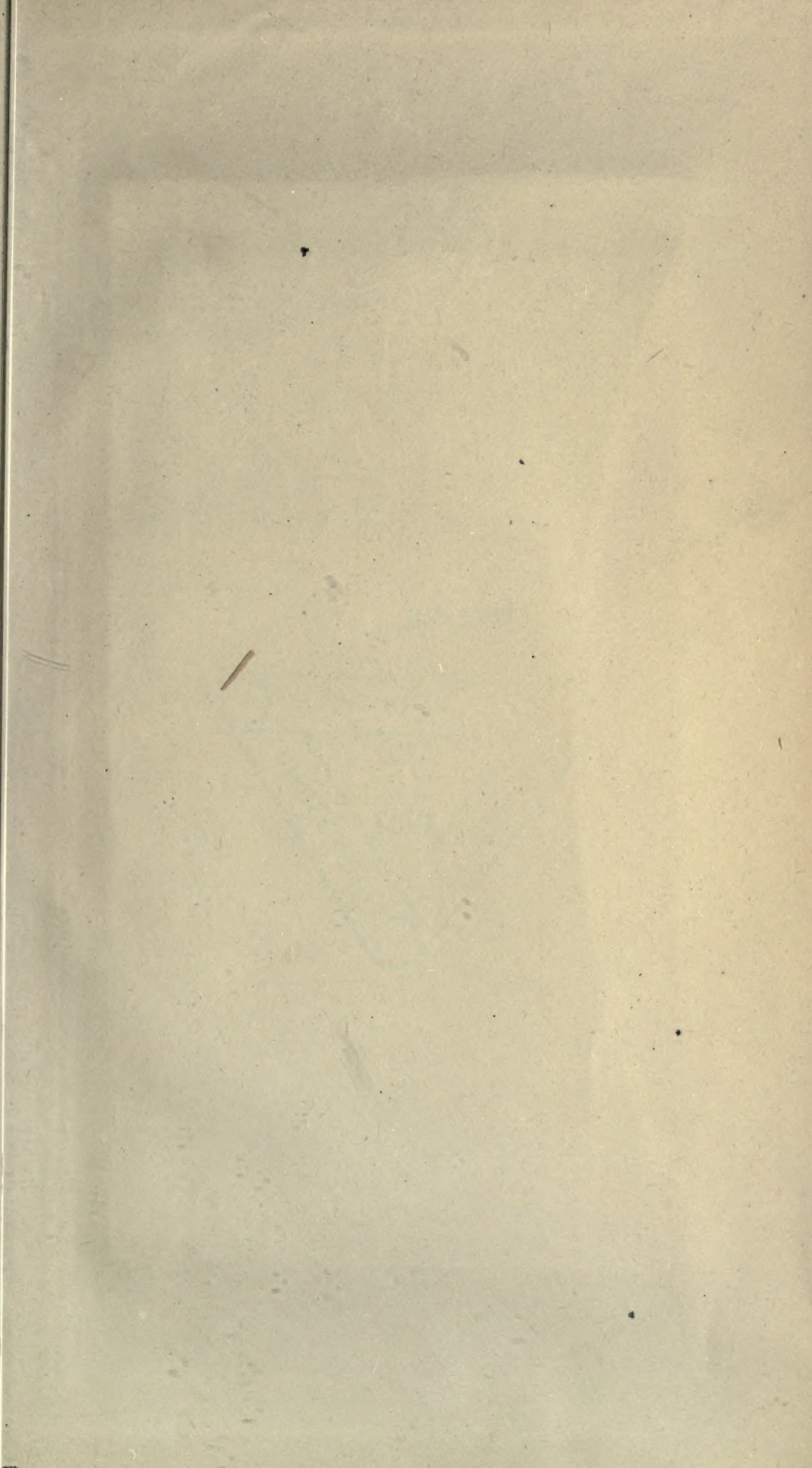
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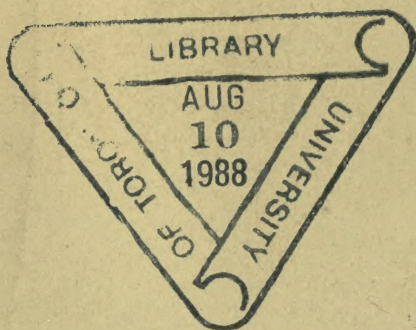
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